THE STORY OF DAVID'S RISE:
A TRADITIO-HISTORICAL STUDY OF
I SAMUEL xvi 14-II SAMUEL v

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 1
The Young Hero (I Samuel xvi 14-xix 7) 8
The Fugitive (I Samuel xix 8-xxi). 34
The Condottiere (I Samuel xxii-xxvi). 50
The Vassal Prince (I Samuel xxvii-II Samuel i) 100
King Over Judah (II Samuel ii-iv). 140
King Over Israel (II Samuel v) 167
Conclusion 187
Appendix 220
Bibliography 225

INTRODUCTION

The main theories of classical literary research in the books of Samuel are advocated less and less frequently in recent years.[1] For example, Budde's[2] view that the documents of the Pentateuch are continued in I-II Samuel has gained little support since Eissfeldt's Die Komposition der Samuelbücher.[3] Most scholars now agree that the linguistic and stylistic constants which separate "J" and "E" in other Old Testament books are missing here.[4] Moreover, the many attempts to gather the conflicting and parallel accounts of the Samuel corpus into a second homogeneous writing have not proved successful. The passages usually attributed to "E" or the "late source" are too fragmentary and disjointed to constitute an unbroken narrative sequence,[5] let alone two additional documents, as Eissfeldt proposes.[6] A more convincing argument is advanced by Rost,[7] who rejects the notion that two parallel documents (an early and a late source) have been interwoven all along their full lengths in order to produce the present books of Samuel. Rost[8] holds that writings of a more limited scope (the Ark Narrative,[9] David's Rise,[10] and the Succession History[11]) were laid end to end to form the present books of Samuel. This hypothesis has had an enormous impact on subsequent Samuel studies, as is witnessed by the work of Alt,[12] Noth,[13] Nübel,[14] and others.

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[1] Cf. the article by Norman H. Snaith in The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Research and Discovery, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 97-102.

[2] Cf. Karl Budde, Die Samuelbücher, Vol. VIII of the Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament, ed. Karl Marti (Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1902), p. xvii ff. Hereafter referred to as Budde, KHC.

[3] Otto Eissfeldt, Die Komposition der Samuelbücher (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1931). Hereafter referred to as Eissfeldt, Komposition.

[4] Cf. Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), pp. 341 and 364. Hereafter referred to as Pfeiffer, Introduction.

[5] Ibid.

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[6] Cf. *supra*, n. 3.

[7] Cf. Ernst Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, ed. and rev. Leonhard Rost (8th ed. rev.; Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1950), pp. 82-92. (Hereafter referred to as Rost and Sellin, *Einleitung*^{8}.) Cf. also Leonhard Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids*, Vol. III, No. 6 of the "Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament," ed. R. Kittel et al. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1926). Hereafter referred to as Rost, *Thronnachfolge Davids*.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] I Samuel iv-vi; II Samuel vi.

[10] I. xvi 14-II. v.

[11] II. vii; ix-xx; I Kings i-ii.

[12] Albrecht Alt, "David," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2d ed.; Tübingen: 1956 ff.), cols. 1795-98.

[13] Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (2d ed.; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957), pp. 61-67. Hereafter referred to as Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*.

[14] Hans-Ulrich Nübel, *Davids Aufstieg in der Frühe israelitischer Geschichtsschreibung* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 1959). Hereafter referred to as Nübel, *Davids Aufstieg*.

Rost's view of the composition of I-II Samuel is the point of departure for the present essay on "the Story of David's Rise" (I. xvi 14-II. v).

Gressmann's Die älteste Geschichtschreibung und Prophetie Israels[15] represents a reaction against documentary analysis no less revolutionary than that of Rost. But, unlike Rost, Gressmann completely abandons the methods of Budde[16] and operates on the basis of religio-historical and form critical categories instead. Why, asks Gressmann, do the narratives which comprise the so-called "early source" often differ markedly in style, theology, and characterization of David and Saul? To answer this question, the form critic seeks to go behind the history writings of I-II Samuel to the oral blocks of tradition on which the writer is dependent. Gressmann believes that the comprehensive narratives of the books of Samuel are composed of smaller units such as cult legends, anecdotes, hero sagas, and story cycles, which led an independent existence before being joined in a consecutive account. The task of the critic is to isolate and describe the various "forms" of tradition.

This methodology is obviously presupposed in the following interpretation of "David's Rise," but the problem is that Gressmann is mainly interested in the individual sagas and anecdotes.[17] The account of David's introduction to Saul's court (I. xvi 14-23), for example, is treated as a particle of tradition which is completely separate from any larger context. Yet even a casual reading of the other adventures at Saul's court (I. xviii 6-xix 7) will show that these stories are closely related to I Samuel xvi 14-23. A more detailed analysis suggests that most narratives came to the writer of "David's Rise" not as heterogeneous fragments but as collections or complexes of tradition. A fundamental question is the makeup of these complexes. Where did they originate? What special interests did they serve? Around what motifs did they congregate? These are traditio-historical questions which the material invites us to consider. The recent studies of Carlson,[18] Koch,[19] and

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[15] Hugo Gressmann, Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels, Sect. II, Vol. 1: Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl (2d ed. rev.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1921), pp. xv-xvi. Hereafter referred to as Gressmann, SAT, II:1.

[16] See supra, n. 2.

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[17] Cf. Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, Vol. II (2d ed. rev.; Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1952), p. 92.

[18] R. A. Carlson, David, the chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel, trans. Eric J. Sharpe and Stanley Rudman (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1964). Hereafter referred to as Carlson, David, the chosen King.

[19] Klaus Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte? Neue Wege der Bibelexegese (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), pp. 148-167. Hereafter referred to as Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte?

Hertzberg[20] are examples of this approach.

An investigation of the origins of the early David traditions does not, on the other hand, invalidate the quest for an original "Story of David's Rise." There is every reason to believe, as literary critics have consistently maintained,[21] that the stories of David's ascendancy were written down at an early period, perhaps less than a hundred years after the events being recounted. Once the textual corruptions, scribal glosses, and accretions from the later tradition have been removed, the narrative that remains is suprisingly well-constructed. At this point Hertzberg's skepticism[22] about the existence of an early account of "David's Rise" must be emphatically rejected. A traditio-historical analysis of I Samuel xvi 14-II Samuel v can by no means ignore the literary problems illuminated by scholars from Wellhausen[23] to the present.

But the inadequacies of the critiques of Wellhausen,

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[20] H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, trans. J. S. Bowden ("Old Testament Library"; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964). Hereafter referred to as Hertzberg, Samuel.

[21] Cf. G. B. Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. II, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 860. Hereafter referred to as Caird, IB.

[22] Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 244.

[23] Julius Wellhausen, Die Komposition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments (2d ed.; Berlin: B. Reimar, 1889). Hereafter referred to as Wellhausen, Komposition.

Budde, and their modern disciples stem not only from a failure to study the pre-literary forms of tradition. A more serious defect is a misunderstanding of the thematic structure of "the Story of David's Rise" in its entirety. Pfeiffer[24] and Caird,[25] for example, have described the narrative of the events leading to David's accession (a part of the "early source") as a strictly objective, straightforward account. "There is a striking absence of all moralizing reflections, homiletical developments, and 'philosophy of history,'"[26] writes Pfeiffer. This is no doubt an accurate description of II Samuel ix-xx (the Succession History), but whether it applies to "David's Rise" is another matter. Motifs like "the Lord is with him" and "David inquired of the Lord" point to a sustained theological development. Numerous speeches and episodes illustrating David's fear of bloodguilt and sacrilege are partially inspired by didactic motives. Indeed, the ideological character of so many narratives in "the Story of David's Rise" raises important questions about its literary genre. Why was this writing composed? Who was responsible? What was the Sitz im Leben of the narrative as a whole?

To view I Samuel xvi 14-II Samuel v from this standpoint is once again to call in question the established results of the older Samuel scholarship. If "David's Rise" is motivated in part by dogmatic interests, as is being argued here, then we shall have to consider the possibility that some of the "duplicate accounts" in I Samuel xvi-xxxi were included in the original document for apologetic reasons. Especially does this become an issue with regard to I Samuel xxiv and xxvi. However, the literary problems vary from doublet to doublet, and the disputed passages must be evaluated one at a time. The point is this: the narrator is as much interested in developing a point of view as in telling a good story, and his aesthetic canons are not always the same as ours.[27] His work is a considerable literary achievement, but it is also a vehicle for defending the reputation of David. Hence, apart from an investigation of the traditions and themes on which "the Story of David's Rise" is based, its compositional structure is difficult, if not impossible, to understand. The separation of the original ingredients of "David's Rise" from the later additions necessarily involves a traditio-historical analysis.

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[24] Cf. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 358.

[25] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 866.

[26] Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 358.

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[27] Cf. William McKane, I & II Samuel; Introduction and Commentary ("Torch Bible Commentaries," ed. John Marsh and Alan Richardson; London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 25. Hereafter referred to as McKane, TBC.

THE YOUNG HERO (I Samuel xvi 14-xix 7)

The Septuagint Text of I Samuel xvii-xviii

A preliminary but important aspect of the interpretation of I Samuel xvi 14-xix 7 is the choice of a text. If, as is being maintained here, the Septuagint's Codex Vaticanus represents the original version, the following passages, verses, and verse fragments would be deleted from the Hebrew:

xvii 12-31. This is a second introduction of David to the reader (v. 12). Jesse sends provisions by the youngest to his eldest sons, who are encamped with Saul's army (vv. 13-22). David hears Goliath's challenge and is told of the reward offered by Saul (vv. 24-27). Eliab, the oldest brother, rebukes David for his rash response to the Philistine dare (vv. 28-30). David is brought to Saul (v. 31).

xvii 41, 48b. Forty-one anticipates 48a; 48b repeats 40e: "And he drew near to the Philistine."

xvii 50, 51c. David's victory is summarized before it is completed: there was no sword in David's hand (v. 50). The gloss, "and he drew it out of its sheath," (v. 51c), supports the contention of the previous verse, that David had no sword of his own.

xvii 55-58. David's identity is made known to Saul for the second time.

xviii 1-6a. Jonathan makes a covenant with David (vv. 1, 3-4). Saul takes David into his household for the second time (v. 2); he promotes him (v. 5). A gloss links the events of chapter xvii to xviii 6b-9 (v. 6a).

xviii 10-11. Saul tries to kill David with his spear.

xviii 12b. "Because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul." The theme of the original text is repeated.

xviii 17-19. Saul offers David the hand of his daughter, Merab, in marriage but, without explanation, decides to give her to Adriel instead.

xviii 21b. Saul bypasses his own deputies for direct negotiations with David.

xviii 26c. David acquires the foreskins (the bridal price) prior to the deadline, "before the time had expired,"—an item hitherto unmentioned by the text.

xviii 27. Only the word, מאתים , should be changed to מאה ; one hundred, not two hundred foreskins.

xviii 29b-30. The enmity of Saul, the continuing struggle with the Philistines, David's continuing successes are recapitulated.

The preference registered for Septuagint's xvii-xviii is not a blanket endorsement of every peculiarity of the Greek, here or elsewhere. In spite of the fact that the Masoretic text must be emended time and again on the basis of this version, each deviation has to be considered on its own merits. The Codex Vaticanus, as other Greek recensions, has undergone a considerable history of editing and is definitely not a perfect text. Nor was its Hebrew Vorlage. A number of expansions or explanatory glosses were doubtless present before Samuel was translated.[1]

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[1] Cf. LXX's xvii 43, e.g.; to the insult of Goliath, David replies, "Yes and worse than a dog!" This is hardly an improvement of the Masoretic text.

Still, the lucidity of the shorter text surpasses that of the longer version by a sizeable margin. Furthermore, the few published fragments of 4Qumran Samuel^{B} tend to enhance the previous reputation of the Septuagint's Samuel.[2] The studies of Wellhausen[3] and Driver,[4] and the recent articles of H. J. Stoebe[5] take on a new importance precisely because of their high regard for Septuagint readings.

The problem here is the relative merits of the widely divergent chapters xvii and xviii. With regard to xviii 6-30 S. R. Driver has summarized the views of most scholars:

> In this instance, it is generally admitted that the LXX text deserves the preference above MT: the sequence of events is clearer; and the gradual growth of Saul's enmity towards David—in accordance with psychological

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[2] Frank M. Cross, Jr., "A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew underlying the Septuagint," BASOR, CXXXII (December, 1953), 15-26. Cf. also "The Oldest Manuscripts from Qumran," JBL, LXXIV (September, 1955), 147-172 and "The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judean Desert," HThR, LVII:4 (October, 1964), 281-299.

[3] Julius Wellhausen, Der Text der Bücher Samuelis untersucht (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1871). Hereafter referred to as Wellhausen, Text der Samuelis.

[4] S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel (2d ed. rev.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913). Hereafter referred to as Driver, Notes on Samuel.

[5] H. J. Stoebe, "Die Goliath Pericope: I Samuel xvii 1-xviii 5 und die Textform der LXX," VT, VI (October, 1956), 397-413. Cf. also "David und Mikal: Überlegungen zur Jugendgeschichte David," Von Ugarit nach Qumran, ed. J. Hempel et al. (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958), pp. 224-243.

> truth is distinctly marked. . . . The additions in MT emphasize unduly, and prematurely, the intensity of Saul's enmity. They also harmonize badly with the account of David's betrothal to Michal.[6]

Driver,[7] Wellhausen[8] and their disciples are less impressed with the assets of Vaticanus' xvii. Even if verses 12-31 be omitted, they argue, the notion of David's frailty and inexperience in verses 32-39 harmonize poorly with the glowing description of the young courtier at xvi 18, "a man of valor, a man of war." On closer examination this argument is unconvincing;[9] it does, however, point up the difficulty of dealing with chapters xvi, xvii, and xviii along text critical lines alone.

But, given the claim that the Septuagint text of chapters xvii and xviii does not remove the conflicting elements altogether, they are nonetheless "greatly reduced," as Driver has noted.[10] This is putting it mildly! The tensions of the shorter text are rather tame besides the contradictions of its lengthier relation. The idea that David is completely unknown to Saul prior to his victory over Goliath (xvii 55-58) cannot be reconciled with xvi 14-23. Nor does the duplicate account of Saul's first attempt on

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[6] Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 155.

[7] Ibid., p. 150.

[8] Cf. Wellhausen, Komposition, pp. 251-52.

[9] See infra, pp. 14-16.

[10] Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 150.

David's life (xviii 10-11) make sense within the narrative framework of chapter xviii. In the original version of this event (xix 9-10) David is frightened by Saul's impulsive deed and flees the court at once; but in the doublet (xviii 10-11) two attempted murders effect no immediate change in David's relationship to Saul. The other deviations of the longer text from the Septuagint are either repetitious or unessential to the narrative or both. Hence, the view adopted here coincides with that of W. R. Smith,[11] A. R. S. Kennedy,[12] A. Weiser,[13] G. B. Caird,[14] and H. J. Stoebe,[15] all of whom recognize the superiority and originality of the Septuagint version of chapters xvii and xviii.

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[11] W. Robertson Smith, The Old Testament in the Jewish Church (2d. ed. rev.; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1892), pp. 120-24. Hereafter referred to as W. R. Smith, The Old Testament in the Jewish Church^2.

[12] A. R. S. Kennedy, Samuel, Vol. VI of The New Century Bible, ed. Walter F. Adeney (34 vols.; New York: Henry Frowde, 1905), 119-121. Hereafter referred to as Kennedy, NCB.

[13] Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 161. Hereafter referred to as Weiser, The Old Testament.

[14] Caird, IB, pp. 857-58.

[15] Stoebe, "Die Goliath Pericope," VT, 1956, p. 410. In addition to Stoebe, W. R. Smith, A. R. S. Kennedy and Weiser, Henry Preserved Smith is more or less sympathetic with this point of view. Cf. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, Vol. IX of The International Critical Commentary, ed. S. R. Driver et al. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 150-51. Hereafter referred to as H. P. Smith, ICC. The uncertainty of literary critical findings on this issue is illustrated by the fact that Wellhausen's original position clearly favored LXX's xvi 14-xviii 9. Cf. Text der Samuelis, p. 104.

The "Gibeah Complex" and the Composition of I Samuel xvi 14-xix 7

The adoption of the Septuagint text of I Samuel xvii-xviii is only the first step toward resolving the difficulties of "the Young Hero." The picture of David in xvi 1-13 as a shepherd lad reflects that of the longer version of chapter xvii (verses 12-31, 55-58), which is a later tradition. In the shorter text of chapter xvii and especially in xvi 14-23, on the other hand, David is presented as a youth mature enough to become the king's armor-bearer but not experienced enough (in Saul's opinion, at least) to take on Goliath.[1] The secondary character of xvi 1-13 is also indicated by a comparison of the original version of David's anointing at Hebron (II Samuel v 1-3) with a later account of the same event (I Chronicles xi 1-3).[2]
II Samuel v 1-3 does not mention David's consecration at the hands of Samuel, nor is this tradition presupposed in any part of the books of Samuel; even the tendentious passages at II Samuel vii 8 and xii 7, where such an allusion would normally be expected, do not refer explicitly to xvi 1-13. Yet, by the time the Chronicler incorporated

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[1] See *infra*, p. 23.

[2] See *infra*, p. 175.

II Samuel v 1-3 into his history (ca. 400 B.C.), the prophetic anointing of David had become an article of faith. Chronicles xi 1-3 attempts to reconcile the anointing at Bethlehem with the later consecration at Hebron. Actually, xvi 1-13 is more appropriate as a sequel to the previous pericope (Saul's rejection by Samuel) than as an introduction to "the Story of David's Rise." Hertzberg has correctly described I Samuel xv and xvi 1-13 as part of the Gilgal tradition.[3] These narratives owe their present position in the books of Samuel to the deuteronomic historian.[4]

"The Story of David's Rise" begins with xvi 14-23, where David is introduced to Saul's court as a competent musician who is also a bold young man. This coincides perfectly with the image of David presented in chapter xviii 6-29 (the shorter text, of course) and in xix 1-7. In rapid succession David wins the affection of Saul (xvi 14-23), the admiration of the women of Israel (xviii 6-9), the highest rank in the royal army (xviii 12-16), the love of the king's daughter (xviii 20-29), and the friendship of the king's son (xix 1-7). These five pericopes are links in a chain of events which gradually unfold David's early relationship with Saul and the other members of his household. As such, these narratives provide an invaluable background for understanding David's subsequent interactions with Saul, Jonathan, and Michal. All of these traditions have a common setting: Saul's court at Gibeah. For this reason the supposition that these stories originated in the environs of Gibeah is not improbable, despite the usual association of this village fortress with the name of Saul.[5] It must be remembered that even during the king's lifetime there was considerable support and enthusiasm for David's cause among the Israelites at Saul's court (xvi 18, xxii 7), an enthusiasm which surely increased when the king's followers fled to Mahanaim, and Gibeah came under the influence of the Judean government at Hebron.[6] After David moved the seat of government to Jerusalem, of course, the former residence of Saul became a suburb of the new capital and, in all probability, a Sitz im Leben in which pro-David traditions were developed. Hence, there is good reason to believe that the oral traditions on which xvi 14-23 and xviii 6-xix 7 are based were recounted at first by partisans of David who lived in the area of this "city of Saul." This group of narratives will be referred to as the "Gibeah" or "young hero" complex.

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[3] The traditions associated with the Gilgal sanctuary are, according to Hertzberg, I Samuel xi, xv, and xvi 1-13. Cf. Hertzberg, _Samuel_, pp. 123-136, _passim_.

[4] Cf. Noth, _Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien_, p. 62.

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[5] Gibeah is probably to be identified with Tell el-Ful, some 3-1/2 miles north of Jerusalem. Cf. W. H. Morton, "Gibeah," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. G. A. Buttrick et al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 390-91. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible is hereafter referred to as IDB. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 132, argues that the "well-informed" and "true-to-life" account of Saul's wars with the Philistines (I Samuel xiii-xiv) derived from Gibeah and should probably be regarded as "the beginnings of court history writing." That I Samuel xiii-xiv was localized in Gibeah is a plausible hypothesis. However, the view being advocated above, i.e., a cycle of pro-David traditions was also produced in the neighborhood of Gibeah, is equally defensible.

[6] After the defeat of the Benjaminites at the pool of Gibeon (a city now identified with the town of el-Jib, six miles northwest of Jerusalem), the forces of David presumably exercised control over the area immediately north of Jerusalem, which includes, of course, the city of Gibeah. Cf. II Samuel ii 12-32 and J. B. Pritchard, "Gibeon," IDB, pp. 391-93.

The Goliath pericope (xvii 1-11, 32-54), on the other hand, is a hero legend which was originally independent of the "Gibeah complex" and which was probably preserved by some local cult.[7] Chapter xvii can be understood simply as an inspiring story of the wonders wrought by faith in Yahweh. However, it is no less evident that the story of David and the giant must also be interpreted in connection with the events which precede and follow in its present literary context. Apparently, the writer himself has integrated the Goliath tradition with the "Gibeah complex." As it stands, the shorter text of chapter xvii is consistent with both the plot and the dogmatic pattern of "the Story of David's Rise."

The theme that runs throughout "the Young Hero" is "the Lord is with him." From the introduction of David at

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[7] See infra, p. 25.

Saul's court to Jonathan's intercession on behalf of his friend (xix 1-7), it is evident that David owes his phenomenal rise not to his own magnetism but to the providence of Yahweh. This theme is the final constituent of the formal recommendation at xvi 18: "And the Lord is with him." It is the genuine hope of the king when he accepts David's offer to engage Goliath in mortal combat: "Go and the Lord be with you" (xvii 37). It is behind the numerous military successes of the young commander: "And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him" (xviii 14). It contributes to the exasperation of Saul; for finally the king himself is driven to the recognition that "the Lord was with David" (xviii 28a). This motif is thus the organizing principle for the entire series of pericopes from xvi 14 to xix 7.[8]

In the concluding episode (xix 1-7) the emphasis shifts somewhat from an enumeration of David's successes to the larger considerations of "David's Rise." How will Saul conduct himself toward this youth whom he has come to regard as a dangerous rival? How will David respond to the threat represented by his master's growing hatred? Such questions are unimportant in "the Young Hero" but are more and more the preoccupation of the succeeding chapters in "the Story of David's Rise."

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[8] Cf. S. Amsler, David, Roi et Messie, Vol. XLIX of the "Cahiers Theologiques," ed. J. J. von Allmen et al. (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1963), p. 25, n. 4. Hereafter referred to as Amsler, David, Roi et Messie.

David is Introduced to Saul (xvi 14-23)

The occasion for David's meeting with Saul is the psychological turmoil of the king: "An evil spirit from the Lord tormented him" (v. 14b). The explanation of Saul's neurotic behavior in terms of the influence of an "evil spirit" is wholly in keeping with the psychology and theology of the time[1] and should not be confused with the attempts of the later tradition to paint Saul as impious and malevolent through and through.[2] In the present account (xvi 14-23) Saul is not a blackguard but a man who is subject to acute depression and erratic behavior at times, a picture of Saul which is well attested by a number of reliable traditions (I Samuel x 9-13, xx 33, and xxviii 3-25). With the proper therapy (provided by David's music) Saul's moodiness passes, and once again he functions as a normal person. "And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him" (v. 23).

The introduction of David as "a son of Jesse the

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[1] "In accordance with the medical conceptions of the time, our author diagnosed this condition as possession of an evil spirit sent by Jehovah," writes Robert H. Pfeiffer in his Introduction, p. 347.

[2] Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, p. 32.

Bethlehemite, skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him" (v. 18) seems at first glance a catalogue of virtues not entirely in agreement with impressions left elsewhere. David as "man of war" seems to conflict with the David who is unable "to fight the Philistine" in the following episode (xvii 1-11, 32-54). This alleged discrepancy has led some scholars to conclude either that "man of valor, man of war" (xvi 18) is a gloss[3] or else that the Goliath narrative (even the shorter text) is not a part of the original writing (or "early source").[4]

Neither conclusion is warranted. In the first place, David is apparently being introduced to Saul not only as a talented musician but also as a brave young man. In verse 21 David becomes Saul's armor-bearer, a position of honor and trust which would demand a dauntless spirit but not necessarily experience in battle. "An armour-bearer was not a full warrior but a sort of page or apprentice in arms . . . whose most warlike function is to kill outright those whom his master has struck down,"[5] notes W. R. Smith, who also observes that a full grown warrior would hardly find it necessary to ask his father's permission to join Saul. What the text means, therefore, by "man of valor, man of war" is that David already shows promise of being a courageous man. In all probability, Saul's servants also deliberately exaggerate David's military achievements, especially in referring to him as "a man of war."[6] Their idea is to present as favorable an impression as possible. At least, this is the most likely interpretation, when verse 18 is viewed in light of the pericope as a whole.

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[3] Cf. Eissfeldt, Komposition, p. 12 and Kennedy, NCB, p. 119. See infra, p. 20.

[4] Cf. Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel, trans. Menzies and Black (Cleveland: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1961), p. 264. Hereafter referred to as Wellhausen, Prolegomena.

[5] Cf. W. R. Smith, The Old Testament in the Jewish Church^2, pp. 431-32.

From the writer's standpoint, of course, xvi 14-23 must be seen from the perspective of a more comprehensive design. The corollary to the theme, "the Lord is with David," is "the Spirit of the Lord has departed from Saul" (v. 14a). With this begins a process of moral and spiritual deterioration which does not reach its depths until Saul visits the medium of Endor (xxviii 3-25). However, the opening statement of "David's Rise" does not mean that Yahweh has completely abandoned Saul. From the tendentious passages in chapters xxiv, xxvi, and II Samuel i, it is clear that the divine charisma remains with the king to maintain the inviolability of his person. Saul is still "the Lord's anointed," the "evil spirit from Yahweh" notwithstanding.

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[6] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 970, who argues that the writer "puts into the mouth of one of his characters words which the narrative shows to be untrue. The reader is expected to realize that the author gives the truth when writing *propria persona*, but not necessarily when he is writing in character." Cf. *infra*, p. 23.

Goliath's Defiance and David's Faith (xvii 1-11, 32-54)

The first real test of David's mettle comes with the encampment of the Philistine army at Succoth and the challenge of their champion, Goliath.[1] The awesome proportions of the

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[1] The most frequent argument against the historicity of the Goliath narrative is that Elhanan, not David, slew Goliath (II Samuel xxi 19). However, in the shorter text "the Philistine" overcome by David is referred to by name only once (v. 4). Seventeen times the Philistine challenger is simply called "the Philistine" or "this Philistine" or "this uncircumcised Philistine." This suggests that in the original text of David's Rise the name "Goliath" was present neither in chapter xxvii nor in chapters xxi-xxii (cf. xxi 9 and xxii 10). As Caird proposes, the interpolation comes from the hand of "an editor who wrongly identified the nameless champion killed by David with the giant Goliath killed by Elhanan, because in both cases the shaft of their spears was likened to a 'weaver's beam'" (IB, p. 971).

Although the claim that David won a dramatic victory over an unnamed Philistine hero cannot be refuted on the basis of II Samuel xxi 19, this does not mean that the story of David and Goliath is completely reliable. On the contrary, the historical basis of the original tradition has been so altered by theological reflection and reinterpretation that it is not easy to separate fact from fiction. David's pious speeches are surely a part of this later reflection, which may well have been inspired by the cultic use of chapter xvii (see *infra*, pp. 24-25). Moreover, for some reason the terms set forth in the Philistine challenge to the Israelite army ("If he is able to fight with me and to kill me, then we will be your servants") are not mentioned again after verse 9; why the Philistines did not honor their agreement is not explained (see Nübel, *Davids Aufstieg*, pp. 24-25). Also, the statement that David brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem (v. 54) cannot be correct, since Jerusalem was inhabited by the Jebusites prior to the events of II Samuel v. Nonetheless, the basic information conveyed by an and his armaments are detailed for dramatic effect: "the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze . . . and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron" (vv. 5-7). His speech to the army of Israel is provocative and derisive: "Am I not a Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? (v. 8c). I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may do battle together" (v. 10). The Israelite army is stunned and dismayed, but the Septuagint text at verse 32 (which follows verse 11 in that tradition) emphasizes the fear of Saul in particular. "Let not the heart of my lord[2] fail because of him," urges David.

Over against the Gargantuan Goliath the Masoretic text (vv. 12-31) introduces once again the shepherd lad who is still tending his father's herds and who has yet to make the acquaintance of Saul. Verse 15 tries to create the impression that David is commuting between Saul's court and Bethlehem, but this is clearly a gloss supplied by a later editor. However, the shorter text (continuing at verse 32)[3]

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chapter xvii, i.e., that David won fame and prominence by defeating a Philistine warrior in representative combat—this is probably historical.

[2] MT: "Let not the heart of man fail because of him."

[3] Cf. G. B. Caird's arguments for the originality of the shorter (LXX) text (IB, pp. 960-971). Contrast H. U. Nübel, who maintains that the earlier, more reliable version of the Goliath narrative is contained in passages omitted from the Septuagint, especially vv. 12-31 (Davids Aufsteig, p. 22).

draws a contrast between Goliath and his challenger which fits the description of xvi 14-23, where David has given up his former pastoral existence to become Saul's armor-bearer on a permanent basis. It is in this capacity—as Saul's apprentice at arms—that David offers to go forth against the giant. Likewise, Saul's objections to the rash offer of David could just as well be applied to the young armor-bearer of xvi 21[4] as to the shepherd boy of xvii 12-32. "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him," cautions Saul; "for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth" (v. 33). The last phrase of Saul's warning, "from his youth," is noteworthy, because it indicates that the Philistine is a veteran of many such contests. On the other hand, even if David were already recognized as a valiant youth when he came to Saul's court (xvi 18), his accomplishments would be pale in comparison with those of his opponent. The latter was a seasoned warrior equipped with modern weapons; the former was not experienced enough to maneuver himself in Saul's armor. Hence, even without the embellishments of the Masoretic text, David is no match for his adversary. His complete inadequacy to the task is all the more reason for his total dependence on the might of the living God. "The Lord who has delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine," he replies to Saul (v. 37a).

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[4] Cf. Stoebe, "Die Goliath Pericope," VT VI, 1956, 405-406.

By now it is clear that the struggle is essentially religious. Goliath is more than a swaggering foe of the tiny Israelite nation; he is "this uncircumcised Philistine" (v. 36)—a term of religious opprobrium. His offense is not hubris but blasphemy. "He has defied the armies of the living God" (v. 36c). Such defiance (חרף vv. 10, 26, 36, 45), directed as much against Israel's Lord as her armies, can be met only with the weapons appropriate to faith. To go out armed only "with sticks" is better than to advance with curses and contempt for the true God (v. 43). To advance without armor but with confidence in the Lord is better than to rely on the mightiest defenses of bronze and iron. "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (v. 45).

Verse 50c, "And there was no sword in the hand of David" (which is peculiar to the Hebrew), carries this argument to an extreme. This seems a rather clumsy effort to remove from the text any emphasis on the heroics of David. Such is unnecessary, as is the exaggerated picture of David's youth in verses 12-31. Already the shorter text provides an interpretation in which David's role as proclaimer of the meaning of this contest is more important than his accuracy with the sling. "All the earth" is watching, says David, and "all this assembly" (קהלה) wait to see if Israel's God will defend his cause against the Philistines (v. 47).

The devotional and homiletical atmosphere of the Goliath narrative is unmistakable in David's concluding speech (vv. 45-47). "It is remarkable," says Hertzberg, "that at the end the qahal, the (cultic) assembly, and not the people, is mentioned. This text, too, has its basic setting among the hearing community."[5] Thus the story of David and the giant was probably used in the worship of some local sanctuary and came to the writer from this source. Obviously, its main purpose in the cult was to exalt faith in the Lord, not feats on the battlefield. The story ends with the complete rout of the Philistines, which vindicates the promise given in verse 47: "The Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand."

However, the story has also become an integral part of "David's Rise," as was argued in the introduction to "the Young Hero." The victory over the Philistine is now the proof par excellence of David's valor (xvi 18). In its present literary context chapter xvii also gives rise to the eulogizing chant with which David is greeted in the following pericope (xviii 6-9). Moreover, David's heroics in the Goliath narrative are presupposed at I Samuel xix 5, xxi 9, and xxii 10.[6] Finally, chapter xvii contributes significantly to the theme of "the Young Hero." David's faith confirms the presence of the Lord with him (xvii 37), whereas the dismay and impotence on Saul's part foreshadows his downfall.

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[5] Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 152.

David's Success and Saul's Jealousy (xviii 6b-29a)

Following David's combat with Goliath the way is paved for the progressive consolidation of his initial success and the progressive deterioration of his relationship with Saul. The crescendo of public and private acclaim, even adulation of Israel's new hero, is begun at once. "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," chant troops of dancing women (xviii 7). In the Septuagint text, of course, this event follows directly upon xvii 54 and is a perfectly natural continuation of that text.[1]

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[6] Cf. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: The Meridian Library, Meridian Books, 1957), p. 179. Hereafter referred to as Driver, Introduction.

[1] The authenticity of xviii 1-4 cannot be determined with absolute certainty. Was it added to a shorter and more original configuration of traditions, preserved in the main by the LXX? Or was it eradicated from this body of

That David has slain "his ten thousands" is the normal hyperbole in the flush of so magnificent a triumph.[2] The consternation of Saul is also understandable under the circumstances. It is laconically and ominously expressed: "And Saul eyed David from that day on" (xviii 9).

From xviii 6b-9 until the conclusion of this first section of the story (xix 1-7), the upsurge in David's popularity is matched only by the growing intensity of Saul's hostility. xviii 6-9 relates the exuberance of the dancers'

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traditions for reasons that can only be conjectured? Ch. xx 8b, ". . . For you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you . . . ," was evidently written with xviii 1-4 in mind. Hence it argues for the latter alternative.

However, the setting of this early covenant ritual is suspect. Preceding it is a tradition (xviii 55-58) at loggerheads with both xvi 14-23 and xvii 32-39; it supposes that David is a total stranger to Saul! Following xviii 1-4 is a premature promotion of David (v. 5) appropriated from vv. 13-14. xviii 2 contradicts xvi 22, aside from the fact that it interrupts the natural connection of v. 1 with v. 3. Moreover, the corrupt character of MT's xvii-xviii on the whole cannot but strengthen the claims of the text omitting xviii 1-5.

The only thing that can be said for certain is that the Hebrew prototypes represented by Vaticanus continued to reject MT's version of xvii-xviii, as did the later recensions. However, for some reason MT's xx, which included a reference to xviii 3-4, was accepted. At what point we do not know.

[2] Wellhausen, (Komposition, p. 252) has argued that the slaying of ten thousand men presupposes a longer period of military service than a single victory. But surely the purpose of the chant is not to recite facts but to lavish praise—in poetry at that! xviii 6-9 presupposes two things: 1) a previous meeting of David and Saul; and 2) a startling military achievement by David. The present Septuagint text is adequate for both these requirements.

plaudits and the ominous reaction of the king.[3] The following summary (xviii 12a, 13-16) allows for the indefinite interval in which David, after his promotion, achieves still greater renown with the people, and concomitantly, greater notoriety with the crown. "When Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them" (vv. 15-16). The narrative leaves no doubt as to the reason for the young hero's prominence. "David had success in all his undertakings; for the Lord was with him" (v. 14).

"Now Saul's daughter loved David" (v. 20a).[4] Whether the tradition promising Saul's daughter to the victor over Goliath (xvii 25) is genuine or not,[5] this statement comes somewhat unexpectedly at this juncture and signals an abrupt transition from verses 12-16. Until this moment the story has been confined to conquest and rivalry between heroes. Now the love of Michal for David is presented as an accomplished fact. How or why the romance blossomed is of no interest to the writer. Of course, it blends perfectly with the context; for in his gradual accumulation of popular support, no triumph is more sweetly savored than the love of the king's daughter. But Saul, like David, is not unaware of the political ramifications of such affections. David protests his unworthiness of the distinction the king would confer upon him: "Does it seem to you a little thing, to become son-in-law to the king . . . ?" (v. 23b). But Saul bargains with David, hoping secretly to turn the situation to his own advantage. Perhaps, he thinks, in the course of David's efforts to acquire the bridal price (one hundred Philistine foreskins!), he will fall upon some misfortune (v. 21a); and the king will be rid of a rival. But to Saul's surprise and chagrin, David returns with the

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[3] xviii 8-10, 17d, 21b, 29b are inspired by an apparent attempt to villify Saul. There is no reason to suppose that such an attitude is late, however. The opposition to Saul is vociferous and widespread—during his lifetime! Nor can it be argued that a later redactor reworked the whole of I Samuel xvi-II Samuel v in order to suppress favorable notions of Israel's first king. The fact is that the basic position of this narrative is not unsympathetic toward Saul. He is regarded throughout as the Lord's anointed; to lay violent hands upon him is to commit sin. What is more, the reasons for Saul's jealousy and opposition to David are easily accounted for, solely in light of the chain of events here recounted. The most that can be said is that here and there some harsher judgment underscores a particular foible or failing of Saul. Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 20, and Gressmann, SAT II;1, p. 78.

[4] Stoebe believes that the story of David's early successes was modified in the tradition on the model of certain patriarchal legends. David was thought to be the fulfillment of the promises given to Jacob and Joseph in particular; e.g., the prototype of the Merab incident (xviii 17-19)—and the Michal episode as well—is the bargain of Laban with Jacob. Both David and Jacob were duped by a shrewd father-in-law. ("David und Mikal," Von Ugarit nach Qumran, p. 242.)

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[5] Cf. Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, pp. 17, 28-29. Nübel considers xvii 12-31 the germ of the original Goliath pericope; the possible anticipation of the Michal episode by xvii 25 is the cornerstone of his theory. Of course, this also involves the rejection of xvi 14-23 from the Grundschrift, a position that has not been accepted here. See supra, pp. 19-20. Cf. also Gressmann, SAT II:1, p. 79, who denies literary connections between xvii 25 and xviii 20-29.

Philistine foreskins and marches off with the princess. Now even Saul is forced to acknowledge what the reader already knows: "But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that all Israel[6] loved him, Saul was still more afraid of David" (vv. 28-29b). Thus concludes the Greek version of chapter xviii. Saul's suspicions and fears have hitherto smouldered within. Now they fester into an open sore; Saul has made up his mind to kill David (xix 1a).

Jonathan Intercedes with Saul for his Friend (xix 1-7)

In the later tradition represented by the Masoretic text, Jonathan was introduced after the Goliath pericope. In the Septuagint, on the other hand, Jonathan is mentioned for the first time at xix 1. Thus begins the most poignant experience of David's youth, his friendship with Jonathan. "But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David" (xix 1b).

When Jonathan learns of Saul's animosity toward David, he urges his father not to harm David:[1] "Let not the

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[6] Read "all Israel" with LXX, not "Michal" with MT.

[1] Even so redoubtable a literary critic as S. R. Driver has not been persuaded by the contentions of Wellhausen (Komposition, p. 253) and Budde (KHC, p. 136) to the effect that xix 1-7 and xx are duplicate accounts of the same event. "The resemblance, however, is very partial," writes Driver, "and Saul's attitude was probably apt to fluctuate from day to day with his changeful temper (comp. 19:6f after v. 1)." Cf. S. R. Driver, Introduction, p. 180.

The more troublesome problem is the relationship of v 3a, "And I will go forth and stand beside my father in the field where you are," to the rest of the pericope and king sin against his servant David; because he has not sinned against you" (v. 4b). This is a tactful and effective argument, which is no doubt strengthened by the fact that it comes from the king's son. Yet, as Jonathan continues his plea, one may with good reason wonder if the historian is not here exploiting the oral tradition in accord with his

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beyond it, to xx 19. Unless Caspari is correct in assuming that Saul is here pictured as engaging in some kind of agricultural task, there is no reason why the king should be in the field in the first place. Cf. Wilhelm Caspari, Die Samuelbücher, Vol. VII of the Kommentar zum Alten Testament, ed. Ernst Sellin (Leipzig: A. Deicherts, 1926), p. 234. Hereafter referred to as Caspari, KAT.

Moreover, v. 3a gives the impression that David is to overhear the dialogue between Saul and Jonathan (note "where you are"). However, v. 3b, "And if I hear anything, I will tell you," indicates that Jonathan is to report his findings to David. This second proposal fits the actual situation; Jonathan does relay the message (v. 7).

That the equally difficult xx 19 is related in some way to the fragment, "in the field where you are," is a still more perplexing datum. xx 19, as drastically emended on the basis of the LXX, reads: "And on the third day you will be greatly missed; then go the place where you hid yourself when the matter was at hand, and remain beside yonder stone heap." Jonathan is speaking in both places, advising David to hide himself—on the first occasion, "in the field where you are;" later, "beside yonder stone heap." The description is vague in both contexts. But at least the attempt to specify a hiding place fits the situation of xx (Cf. vv. 18-24, 35-39). In xix 1-7, on the other hand, it is only necessary that David hide while his friend intercedes for him; no specific hideout is needed. Hence the phrase, "In the field where you are," or at least the three words, "where you are," (אשר אתה שם), should be deleted from xix 3a. Possibly the confusion stems from an accidental conflation of the two texts, due in part to the similarities of the two situations. Cf. Eissfeldt, Komposition, p. 14; Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, pp. 33-34; Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 163.

own purposes. As H. P. Smith notes, "Jonathan's panygyric is little calculated to soothe Saul's jealousy, and represents the author's point of view rather than Jonathan's."[2] Verse 5a ("For he took his life in his hand and he slew the Philistine.") alludes, of course, to the events of chapter xvii and is indicative of the writer's skill in weaving together the various complexes of oral tradition. However, Jonathan's closing admonition in verse 5b clearly reflects the recurrent ideological pattern of "the Story of David's Rise." "Why will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" asks the young prince. The issue is raised again, though under different circumstances and in different language, in chapters xxii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxxi, and II Samuel i, iii, iv, and v. Whether Saul and David will restrain their appetite for violence or leave their future in Yahweh's hands is a question that reverberates on the pages of this narrative.

The intercession of Jonathan is a fitting climax to the story of "the Young Hero." Although xix 1-7 begins with a serious break with Saul, it ends with a reconciliation of the king and his courtier. Once again David waits on Saul's pleasure as he has done throughout this first part of "the Story of David's Rise." So xix 1-7, like the other episodes in this sequence, is a success story; for here Jonathan calls to mind the signal achievement of David up to this point: "He slew the Philistine." In this connection is rehearsed once more the theme of xvi 14-xix 7: "And the Lord wrought a great victory for all Israel." To this latter clause Lucian's recension adds significantly, "by his hand,"[3] which is also represented in the Syriac. Whether genuine or not, this addition captures the spirit of Jonathan's argument. These things have been accomplished because "the Lord is with David."

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[2] H. P. Smith, ICC, p. 176.

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[3] See BH. Cf. Budde, KHC, p. 137, and H. P. Smith, ICC, p. 177.

THE FUGITIVE (I Samuel xix 8-xxi 16)

The story of David's flight from Saul's court is prefaced by a reference to a renewal of hostilites between Israel and the Philistines (xix 8). This is a general reference and does not limit itself to any particular battle or battles. Like xvi 23 and xviii 12-16, it allows for a passing of time between two important periods in David's life. That David deals the Philistines another defeat also provides Saul with a fresh provocation for his jealousy. This time the king loses control of himself and tries to pin David to the wall with his spear. Hence, the rational explanation of Saul's conduct (v. 8) is set alongside the irrational (v. 9). The king feels threatened by David's continuing success and growing popularity, but Saul is also the victim of a chronic emotional illness caused by an "evil spirit from Yahweh."[1]

The literary difficulties begin with the following episode (xix 11-17), David's flight to Michal. It has often been asserted that any one of the four pericopes between xix 17 and xxii 1 would form a more suitable connection to xix 9-10 than its present sequel: "That night[2] Saul sent messengers to the house of David to watch him, that he might take him in the morning." Scholars have noted that David's house would scarcely be thought a refuge from Saul.[3] Ramah, Nob, the fields outside Gibeah, or even Gath would provide a safer hiding place. A more serious problem, however, is the discontinuity of xix 11-17 and 18-24 with xx 1-42.[4] After the first attempt on his life (xix 9-10), David might wonder if Saul's behavior was provoked by a sudden loss of temper, some temporary displeasure, or reflected a permanant change of mind. A scheme to test the king's real intentions toward David would be in order. But, following the additional attacks in xix 11-17 and 18-24, Saul's attitude would no longer be in doubt. Thus the events of chapter xx cannot be reconciled with xix 11-24.[5]

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[1] See BH and Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 134.

The originality of I Samuel xx is not difficult to prove. Jonathan's ruse is, first of all, a reasonable continuation of xix 9-10, as we have seen, but David's flight to his own residence (xix 11-17) is not. Also, Jonathan's quarrel with Saul is presupposed in subsequent events (xxii 6-8, for example), whereas xix 11-17 and 18-24 are not. More importantly, the stories of Jonathan's intercession on David's behalf stand at the heart of the early David tradition. Without xix 1-7 and especially xx 1b-xxi 1, David's anguish at the death of Jonathan and his later relationship to Meribaal would be difficult to comprehend.

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[2] The last two words of v. 10 belong to v. 11. Cf. LXX and Wellhausen, Text der Samuelis, p. 112.

[3] Cf. Wilhelm Nowack, Richter, Ruth, und Bücher Samuelis, Vol. IV of the Handkommentar zum Alten Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902), p. 99. Hereafter referred to as Nowack, HKAT. Cf. also Budde, KHC, pp. 136-140.

[4] Cf. Wellhausen, Komposition, pp. 252-53; Smith, ICC, p. xxv; Caird, IB, p. 858; and Hertzberg, Samuel, pp. 171-72.

[5] Cf. S. Szikszai, "I & II Samuel," IDB, IV, p. 204.

The tale of David and Achish (xxi 11-16) is also late.[6] According to xxi 2-10, David is at Nob with Ahimelech, but the first verse of Achish narrative gives the impression that our hero is fleeing directly from Saul's presence. Thus verse 11a, "And David rose and fled that day from Saul," does not fit here[7] but probably follows xix 24 in the story cycle of which xix 11-24 and xxi 11-16 are a part. Like the Michal episode, the Samuel and Achish narratives are apparently directed to an audience which would enjoy a good laugh at the expense of Saul or the Philistines. In each of the three pericopes David's enemies find themselves in an embarrassing situation where, much to their exasperation and the hearer's entertainment, they are completely taken in by some trick or extraordinary turn of events. Michal's hoax is reminiscent of the patriarchal saga involving Rachel, Laban, and Jacob;[8] here also a loving wife deceives a gullible father in order to assist a hard pressed husband. Saul's pursuit of "the Fugitive" continues at Ramah, as three different groups of messengers go out to seize David, only to fall into an ecstatic trance (xix 18-24). At length the king himself is possessed by the spirit and prophesies all day and night, while David puts distance between him and his father-in-law. Again, the humorous incident at Gath displays an interest in psychic phenomena. David foams at the mouth and raves like a man bereft of his senses, hoping to convince the Philistines that he is not "David, the king of the land" (xxi 12). Achish, king of Gath, asks his servants if he "lacks madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence" (xxi 16). Of course not! Any Israelite knows that there is no dearth of lunatics among the Philistines.[9]

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[6] Cf. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 349.

[7] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 201; for a different view, M. H. Segal, "Studies in the Book of Samuel," JQR, VI (1915-16), 587.

Similarities such as these suggest that the secondary materials added to chapters xix and xxi were joined in an independent collection of flight narratives. The main purpose of xix 11-24 and xxi 11-16 is to amuse and entertain, but these traditions also develop the motif of flight and escape.[10] With Michal's help David "fled and escaped" (xix 12 and 17). Next, David "fled and escaped" to Samuel and "told him all that Saul had done" (xix 18). Finally, David "rose and fled that day from Saul and came to Achish" (xxi 11). These episodes picture David as moving farther and farther away from Saul—from his house, from his daughter's house, from the royal city to Ramah, and even from the land of Israel. Unfortunately, there are no definite clues to the origins of these delightful tales;[11] it can only be assumed that anecdotes of this kind would have been widely known and appreciated. They may have been admitted to the official "Story of David's Rise" not long after it was written. In any event, the traditions at xix 11-17, 18-24 and xxi 11-17 will be referred to as the "flight and escape" cycle.

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[8] Cf. supra, p. 28, n. 4.

[9] Cf. Gressmann, SAT II:1, p. 91.

The individual responsible for inserting these three narratives into the original writing is a skillful editor. At xix 10d[12] he introduces the "flight and escape" cycle by stating its theme: "And David fled and escaped." The idea is repeated in the redactional suture at xx 1a,[13] which connects David's sojourn with Samuel to the Jonathan pericope. The editor's purpose is to build up a momentum of abrupt departures, temporary hideouts, and hurried pursuit, and in this—despite the inconsistencies of the present text—he undoubtedly succeeds. With the assistance of princess, prophet, prince, and priest, David finally makes his way to Gath, where even the Philistines are the unwitting accomplices of our hero.

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[10] Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 166.

[11] Cf. Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 264.

[12] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 178.

However, the original account of David's flight from Saul includes only the following: xix 9-10c; xx 1b-xxi 1; and xxi 2-10. The Jonathan and Ahimelech traditions are presupposed by the Nob pericope in I Samuel xxii 6-23 and are evidently a part of the same oral complex; more will be said on this later. Meanwhile, the thematic significance of "the Fugitive" should not be overlooked. Jonathan repeats the basic idea of "the Young Hero" at xx 13: "May the Lord be with you, as he has been with my father." Implicit in this statement is the assumption that Saul's days are numbered and that Yahweh has chosen David as the next king. Jonathan's covenant with David, "The Lord is between you and me for ever," (v. 23) anticipates the later agreement of David and Saul (xxiv 22-23). David's visit to Nob ultimately results in his alliance with Abiathar; hence, David's dependence on the holy oracle. Thus both xx 1b-xxi 1 and xxi 2-10 belong to the ideological pattern of "the Story of David's Rise."

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[13] _Ibid_, p. 184.

Jonathan's Ruse (xx 1b-xxi 1)[1]

David's skill at dissimulation is a common feature of numerous narratives in I Samuel xvi 14-II Samuel v, and the two incidents which make up "the Fugitive" are particularly interesting in this regard. In the Ahimelech episode (xxi 2-10) David pretends that he is on a mission for the king; at no point in the dialogue does he speak plainly with the priest. In the narrative at hand (xx 1b-xxi 1) David proposes a plan with which to trick Saul. The scheme is, first of all, designed to bring Saul's true feelings toward David into the open. Although David is already persuaded that Saul wants to kill him, he still hopes that Jonathan will be able to reason with his father. Failing that, the artifice will prove to Jonathan that Saul is bent on murdering David, which should foment a crisis in the royal household. Therefore, David's objective is twofold: (1) to force Saul's hand; and (2) to enlist Jonathan's sympathy and possibly his all-out support. It is this second motive which prompts the outburst at verse 8c. "But if there is guilt in me," pleads David, "slay me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?"

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[1] English: I Samuel xx 1b-42.

This is an unmistakable challenge, not of Saul's mind but of Jonathan's; will Jonathan take David's part even if he must thwart Saul's ambitions in the process? In asking this question David risks the loss of a friend, hoping to gain in the exchange a steadfast ally. Apparently, he is willing to use his companion for his own political advantage, although it is difficult to measure the sincerity of David's sentiments with certainty.[2] But Jonathan's devotion to David, on the other hand, is so transparent that their relationship often appears one-sided. The initiative for establishing the covenant between the two youths belongs to Jonathan, as David reminds him (v. 8a). Moreover, Jonathan goes to great lengths to assure David of his loyalty. "If I knew that it was determined by my father that evil should come upon you," says he, "would I not tell you?" (v. 9). The original text continues at verses 12b-13,[3] where Jonathan calls Yahweh to witness his readiness to cooperate with David. A solemn oath is reinforced by a vow making Jonathan's life forfeit in the event of betrayal. Indeed, the firmness of Jonathan's commitment to David is the chief interest of this narrative, a motif that is beautifully expressed in the Septuagint version of verse 17: "And Jonathan swore again by his love for David; for he loved him as he loved his own soul."

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[2] Cf. A. S. Kapelrud, "King David and the Sons of Saul," The Sacral Kingship, Vol. IV of Studies in the History of Religion (Supplements to Numen; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), pp. 296-97.

[3] The MT of vv. 10-17 lies in an obvious state of disorder. The question asked by David, "And who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" (v. 10), assumes that the other alternatives have already been considered. Yet Jonathan continues to talk as if Saul's reaction might be favorable: "Behold, if he is well disposed toward

According to a later editor, it is David who swears an oath to Jonathan, not vice versa. This is the Masoretic reading of verse 17,[4] which is a corruption of the original text and which probably derives from the same scribe who inserted verses 14-16. Here the roles of the protagonists

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David . . ." (v. 12d).

An additional complication stems from Jonathan's suggestion that they move into the open field (v. 11). Nothing is said in vv. 12-17 that could not have been spoken just as well in the setting of vv. 1-9. Apparently they were already conversing in private. Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 173.

Both difficulties are eliminated by the transposition of vv. 10-11 to the end of v. 17. The dialogue of vv. 18-23 deals specifically with the problem of communications arising out of a hostile reaction from the king. The question at v. 10 is a logical introduction to this discussion. Secondly, Jonathan's plan for relaying bad news involves a prearranged hiding place in a field near Gibeah. The setting for the conversation at vv. 18-23 is therefore provided by the suggestion of Jonathan in v. 11: "Come, let us go out into the field." In the original text v. 9 would be continued at v. 12, deleting the first four words, "And Jonathan said to David."

[4] MT: "And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him."

are suddenly reversed. Jonathan becomes the suppliant and David, the benefactor.[5] In verse 14 Jonathan's anxiety shifts all at once from the predicament of David to his own future. "If I am still alive," muses the prince, "show me the loyal love of the Lord, but if I die . . ." Yet nothing in the preceding conversation would prepare the reader for these morbid thoughts. The same applies to the urgent appeal on behalf of Jonathan's progeny: "Do not cut off your loyalty from my house for ever" (v. 15a). This passage is inspired by the events of I Samuel xxiv 22-23 and especially II Samuel ix (the Meribaal episode).[6] In all likelihood, I Samuel xx 14-16 together with the interpolation at verses 40-42[7] were added by the editor who joined "David's Rise" to "the Succession History."

With the transposition of verses 10-11 to the end of verse 17, the story of Jonathan's ḥeṣed for David continues. After reassuring David of his faithfulness (vv. 9, 12b-13, 17), Jonathan turns to consider the very real possibility that his father's reaction will be negative. He accepts the main lines of the plan outlined by David (vv. 5 ff.) but advises him to hide "beside yonder stone heap" (v. 19) and to remain there until Saul has declared himself. Signals are established whereby Jonathan can communicate with David without taking the risk of a *tête-à-tête*. Two days later the issue comes to a head. When Saul inquires concerning David's whereabouts, the outward calm of his question is belied by a deliberate avoidance of our hero's given name. "Why has not *the son of Jesse* come to the meal," asks Saul, "either yesterday or today?" (v. 27). Jonathan tries to ignore the pique in Saul's voice and politely explains that David has requested permission to attend the annual sacrifice at the village of his family, but Saul explodes immediately. "You son of a rebellious girl,"[8] he rails at Jonathan; "do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore, send and fetch him to me, for he shall surely die" (vv. 30-31).

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[5] Cf. Gressmann, SAT II:1, pp. 85-86.

[6] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 992.

[7] Cf. *infra*, p. 45.

No one can doubt any longer the wilfulness of Saul's previous actions or his determination to pursue the course begun in the attack of xix 9-10. His break with David is final. However, as David had surely anticipated, the effects on Jonathan are entirely opposite. Despite the love he bears his father, the prince casts his lot with David. After his confrontation with Saul, Jonathan leaves the table in anger and disgust. "He ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him" (v. 34b). The following morning Jonathan goes into the fields near David's hiding place. At first all proceeds according to plan. Jonathan shouts to the small lad accompanying him, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" (v. 37). By this David knows that he must flee Gibeah at once. But in the later tradition Jonathan is not content to leave it at this; he orders the lad back to the city, whereupon the two friends embrace and weep with one another. However understandable under the circumstances, this last farewell takes place in clear violation of the precautions agreed upon earlier and creates a serious discrepancy with the previous narrative.[9] It is hard to imagine a hardened warrior like Jonathan giving way to the emotional display at verses 40-42, especially after he has just completed the execution of the elaborate plan set forth in verses 18-23.[10] As noted above, most interpreters are convinced that verses 40-42 are an accretion from the same hand that produced verses 14-16.[11]

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[8] Driver, *Notes on Samuel*, p. 171, emends בן־נעות, "son of a perverse woman," to בן־נערת on the strength of the Greek and Latin readings.

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[9] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 195; Nowack, HKAT, p. 102.

[10] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 130-131.

David at Nob (xxi 2-10)[1]

From his hiding place near Gibeah, David flees to Nob,[2] an important sanctuary presided over by Ahimelech. Surprised by David's visit and astonished that the king's general and son-in-law should arrive unaccompanied by his retinue, Ahimelech is visibly disturbed. "Why are you alone and no one with you?" asks the priest (v. 2). To allay his suspicions, David makes up a cloak-and-dagger tale according to which he and his men are on a secret mission for the king. While the soldiers wait for David at "such and such a place," he has come to Ahimelech for food and supplies. For himself David also wants a weapon and presumably a favorable oracle for his journey. The holy oracle is not mentioned here, but the statements of Doeg and Ahimelech in chapter xxii 10 and 15 leave little doubt that David asked for and received the priest's blessing.[3]

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[11] A. S. Kapelrud doubts that the relationship between David and Jonathan was as reciprocal as the narrator of I Samuel implies. "We hear much about the services rendered by Jonathan to David," says Kapelrud ("King David and the Sons of Saul," The Sacral Kingship, p. 296); "but we never hear that David gave Jonathan a hand. The cause of that may be found in the actual situation, as it is never told that David gave Jonathan any direct promise concerning his descendents. It is, however, told that he gave Saul such a promise, I Samuel 24:23. The narrator thus seems to mean that David did not do as much for his friend Jonathan."

[1] English: I Samuel xxi 1-9.

[2] Nob is probably located on Mount Scopus, less than a mile northeast of Jerusalem (cf. O. R. Sellers, "Nob," IDB, III, 536-37). Hertzberg, however, maintains that ancient Nob ("the city of priests" destroyed by Saul) should be identified with Mizpah (the great height of Gibeon). Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 170. In any event, Nob lies on the route south of Gibeah and is a natural stopover for David, who is apparently headed for Bethlehem and his own clan.

David's initial request is for something to eat. But all that is available is "holy bread," which, as Ahimelech explains, may be given to those who are ritually pure and to no one else. "Only if you have kept yourselves from women," insists the priest, "may you eat of it"[4] (v. 4b). The exact wording of David's reply is difficult to recover from the received text, but the meaning is fairly plain. David's expedition is not a secular undertaking but falls within the bounds of holy war. The soldiers will be consecrated with their implements (כֵּלַי) this very day, answers David (v. 5). Whether כֵּלַי refers to their armaments (as in v. 8) or vessels (RSV) or reproductive organs,[5] it amounts to the same thing: this is a sacral endeavor. David is therefore entitled to eat of the holy bread and to draw on the numinous powers of the sanctuary for the success of his enterprise.

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[3] Cf. Smith, ICC, pp. 205-06; Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 178. Contrast Budde, (KHC, ad loc), who argues that xxi 2-10 and xxii 6-23 are from different sources.

[4] The apodosis, "that you may eat of it," is supplied on the basis of 4QumSam^b. Cf. Cross, "The Oldest Manuscripts from Qumran," JBL, LXXIV, 168.

[5] Cf. Budde, KHC, pp. 148-49.

Having procured enough bread for himself and several others, David asks Ahimelech for arms. "For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste," says David (v. 9). This part of his story is highly improbable,[6] since an officer of the royal army would hardly travel without some means of self-protection, regardless of the nature of the journey. By this time, however, Ahimelech is so beguiled that David comes into possession of "the sword of Goliath the Philistine," which was placed in the Nob sanctuary for the same reason the Philistines put Saul's armor in the temple of Ashtareth (I. xxxi 10). The weapon was a valuable trophy and was perhaps thought to possess supernatural power.[7]

But Ahimelech's generosity with the provisions of the temple does not go unobserved. Doeg, "chief of Saul's herdsmen," is present and overhears the conversation between David and Ahimelech—so we are informed in verse 8. In this way the reader is led to suspect that Ahimelech has yet to see the end of his transaction with David. Verse 8 is therefore a bridge between this pericope and xxii 6-23. Meanwhile, our hero goes his way without considering the moral or practical consequences of his deed. He takes advantage of the priest, just as he has used Jonathan. David's chicanery is, of course, made necessary by the exigencies of the moment, but the tradition nonetheless makes it clear that his "hands were red with the blood of Ahimelech and his house."[8] However, the writer of "David's Rise' has another opinion of which we shall hear more in the discussion that follows.

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[6] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 998.

[7] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 91.

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[8] McKane, TBC, p. 135.

THE CONDOTTIERE (xxii 1-xxvi 25)

In "the Condottiere" David leaves behind the role of the gallant youth who stands in the shadow of Saul and Jonathan. In I Samuel xxii-xxvi David is a formidable and dangerous opponent whose piety and self-restraint bring him closer and closer to his destiny. With the help of some four hundred relatives and professional soldiers, David resists Saul and the men of Israel. When the Judean town of Keilah is attacked by the Philistines, David goes to the rescue. Twice he catches Saul off his guard, only to let him go unharmed. David asks Nabal, a wealthy Calebite, for a part of his harvest but winds up with his wife and fortune instead. In the previous section, "the Fugitive," David is alone and on the run. Here David is still fleeing from Saul, but now he is the leader of a band of mercenaries. Despite the difficulties the condottiere has yet to face, his prospects have definitely improved.

"The Condottiere" (xxii-xxvi) depends primarily on two blocks of materials: the "wilderness cycle," which will be discussed prior to the account of David's wanderings in the badlands of Judah (xxiii 14-xxvi 25);[1] and the "Nob complex," which sets forth a candid report of the events leading to the destruction of Nob. The latter complex is comprised of at least three and possibly four units of tradition: xxi 2-10, xxii 1-2, 6-23, and (?) xx 1b-xxi 1.[2] David requests bread and arms from Ahimelech in xxi 2-10, a scene that is witnessed by a man who turns out to be an informer. At xxii 1-2 David organizes a band of guerrillas, the beginning of a new phase in his career, and a development which makes him a serious threat in the eyes of Saul. No less threatening and perhaps even more upsetting to Saul is Jonathan's understanding with David. Their friendship helps to precipitate the crisis in the Gibeah regime and is indirectly a cause of the elimination of the Nob priesthood (cf. xxii 8). The story of Jonathan's ruse can, for this reason, be regarded as an introduction to the Nob traditions, though this is by no means certain.[3]

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[1] Cf. infra, pp. 66 ff.

The distinctive feature of this harshly realistic complex is that it flatters neither David nor Saul.[4] Saul is rash and brutal in his treatment of Nob; David is devious and deceitful. Only Ahimelech is solicitous and forthright in his dealings with the protagonists of the narrative. As for the citizens of Nob, they are the victims of a power struggle between two rather desperate men. Stories as frank and uncomplimentary as these may have been transmitted in villages and clans situated near the city of Nob or by individuals who remembered the actual circumstances of the massacre (Abiathar, for example, who settled at Anathoth).[5] It is also possible that this oral complex was preserved by the Gibeonites, who later recall some heinous offense committed by Saul against their city (II. xxi 1-14). Hertzberg argues that the unspecified crime to which II Samuel xxi 1 refers is the destruction of Nob.[6] "Saul's actions against the priestly city of Nob encroached upon Gibeon and its sanctuary—the great place of Gibeon—so that the words of the Gibeonites need by no means be an exaggeration,"[7] says Hertzberg. In any event, the traditions on which I Samuel xxi and xxii are based present an accurate picture of the Nob tragedy. Saul is the executioner, but David is so preoccupied with his own problems that he fails to advise Ahimelech of the danger of reprisals.

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[2] I Samuel xx 1b-xxi 1 and xxi 2-10 also relate to the narrative of David's flight from Saul's court ("the Fugitive") and were considered earlier in this connection. See _supra_, pp. 40-49.

[3] Cf. Hertzberg, _Samuel_, p. 174, and Gressmann, _SAT_, II:1, p. 86.

[4] Cf. McKane, _TBC_, p. 134 ff.

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[5] I Kings ii 26-27.

[6] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 382.

[7] *Ibid*, p. 383.

As the writer sees it, on the other hand, Saul rather than David comes off badly.[8] In the Moab episode (xxii 3-5) it is necessary for David to hide his parents from Saul, while our hero looks to the deity and His prophet for counsel. The Moab tradition[9] owes its present position to the writer of "David's Rise." The juxtaposition of I Samuel xxii to the two Keilah traditions (xxiii 1-5 and 6-13), which are apparently independent of any larger complex, also has the effect of creating a more favorable impression of David. The story of the Philistine defeat at Keilah is similar to several of the old Judges' traditions; for in xxiii 1-5 David plays the role of a "deliverer" (הוֹשִׁעַ),[10] while Saul is doing just the opposite at Nob (xxii 17). Thus the image of David as a pious hero is underscored by the combination of the Nob sequence with the Moab and Keilah narratives. Together the latter elaborate a theme to which the writer returns at frequent intervals: David's use of the oracle. Not only here but in crisis after crisis "David inquires of the Lord."

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[8] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 134, 139.

[9] This incident may indicate that David had family connections in Moab. Gerleman argues that the book of Ruth was written to show that David was not a Moabite but was related to this people only through his mother, Ruth. Cf. Gillis Gerleman, Ruth, Vol. XVIII of "Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament" (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960), pp. 5-11.

[10] Cf. Amsler's discussion of the "holy war" traditions in I Samuel (Amsler, David, Roi et Messie, pp. 28-29). Amsler views I Samuel xxiii 1-5 as a local tradition of the same genre as the Goliath narrative but more ancient than I Samuel xvii (p. 28).

Of course, the extent of Saul's guiltiness and David's innocence are seen more clearly from the standpoint of the second and more important part of "the Condottiere": I Samuel xxiii 14-xxvi 25. In this report of David's adventures in the Judean wilderness it becomes evident that the real issue at Nob is the avoidance of sacrilege—at least, this is the interpretation of the writer.[11]

David in the Stronghold (xxii 1-5)

From Nob David escapes to "the stronghold[1] of Adullam" (xxii 1a). Here he summons to his side his brothers, all his father's house," and an assortment of volunteers: those in distress, debtors, and every one who was מַר־נֶפֶשׁ " (vv. 1-2). The traditional translation, "discontented,"[2] misses the bite of the Hebrew. Elsewhere mar-nephesh means "angry" (Judges xviii 25), "enraged" (II Samuel xvii 8), and "bitter in soul" (I. xxx 6). These men are malcontents, rebels, and embittered fellows,[3] capable of "lying in wait" for an ambush, as Saul puts it (xxii 8, 13).

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[11] Cf. McKane, TBC, p. 143.

[1] MT: מערת, which most commentators emend to מצדת on the basis of the reading in v. 4. Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 178; Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 184.

[2] KJV, RSV.

In verses 3-5 David moves to safeguard his parents. He and his band march east to Mizpeh of Moab.[4] "Pray let my father and my mother stay with you," David implores the king of Moab, "till I know what God will do for me" (v. 3). Reading between the lines one may catch a glimpse of a subtle contrast between David and Saul. David is telling the Moabites that he and his relatives have fled from Israel because they cannot presume upon the discretion or magnanimity of Saul. Not even David's parents are safe in Israel. Meanwhile, David is seeking the advice of the prophet Gad,[5] whose instructions carry the same weight as those of

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[3] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 203; Budde, KHC, p. 151. Thenius thinks that the bitterness of David's soldiers should not be equated with antipathy toward the government of Saul. Cf. O. Thenius, Die Bücher Samuel erklärt (2d ed.; "Kurzgefasster exegetisches Handbuch"; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1864), p. 103. Hereafter referred to as Thenius, KeH^2.

[4] Cf. J. Muilenburg, "Mizpah," IDB, III, p. 407.

[5] Nübel argues that the prophet Gad inquired of the Lord for David in the oldest traditions and that Abiathar was introduced into the narrative by the priestly redactor; hence, both xxii 20-23 and xxiii 6-13 are secondary (Davids Aufsteig, p. 46). The removal of these passages from the original story is, however, unwarranted. Most literary critics regard xxii 20-23 and xxiii 6-13 as genuine. Cf. Budde, KHC, pp. 154-57, and Carl Steuernagel, Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament ("Sammlung Theologischer Lehrbücher," ed. Carl Steuernagel; Tübingen: J.B.C. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912), p. 320. Hereafter referred to as Steuernagel, Lehrbuch.

Abiathar later on (xxiii 1-13; xxx 7-8). Does this imply that David receives his marching orders through the oracle in the Moab pericope also? This is quite likely. In either event, David is pictured by the writer of "David's Rise" as an unusually religious man. "David's word is also meaningful for the vitality of his piety," says Nowack; "everything he experiences is for him an act of God."[6]

Massacre at Nob (xxii 6-23)

The change in David's situation is quickly brought to the attention of Saul. "And when Saul heard of it, that David and his men were discovered" (v. 6), he called the tribal council into session at Gibeah. The king's anxiety is aggravated by the knowledge that David's allies are not limited to outcasts and riffraff. He demands to know why his fellow Benjaminites have not informed him of Jonathan's pact with David.[1] "Will he make you all commanders of hundreds and commanders of thousands, that all of you conspire against me?" mocks Saul at his council (vv. 7b-8).

The truth is that this is probably the first time the Benjaminites have heard anything of Saul's dispute with Jonathan. Rumors of friction between David and Saul were no doubt in the air, but up to this point only Saul is aware of Jonathan's involvement. In his justifiably disturbed state of mind the king lays the blame for his troubles squarely at the feet of Jonathan: "My son has raised up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day" (v. 8c). Saul regards Jonathan's covenant with David—no less than the gathering of the malcontents at Adullam—as an attempt to undermine the stability of the realm.

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[6] Nowack, HKAT, p. 113.

[1] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 90, who maintains that Jonathan, David, and the priests of Nob were planning a revolt against Saul.

At this point Doeg the Edomite steps forward to tell what he saw at Nob (xxi 8). His story does not agree with the report of I Samuel xxi.[2] In verse 10b Doeg speaks only of food being provided for David, whereas chapter xxi says that David received the bread of the Presence. Also, the first item in Doeg's indictment of Ahimelech, "he inquired of the Lord for him" (v. 10a), is omitted from the previous narrative. But when Saul hears of it, he storms at Ahimelech: "You have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, as at this day" (v. 13). In Saul's mind Ahimelech deserves the same condemnation as Jonathan and David.

From Ahimelech's point of view, the most damaging part of Doeg's testimony appears to be the item omitted from the earlier report: the consulting of the oracle on David's behalf. This is the only part of the accusation Ahimelech bothers to answer specifically. To the reader's surprise, he does not deny the charge. Instead, the priest defends himself on the grounds that he had no knowledge of Saul's break with David. Also, Ahimelech argues that there is nothing singular about the events which Doeg has described; David often comes to Nob to request an oracle.[3] "Is today the first time I have inquired of God for him?" asks Ahimelech (v. 15). Hence, to Ahimelech the oracle represents his longstanding association with our hero and an act of loyalty to the royal family of which David was a member.

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[2] On the literary connections of I. xxi 2-10 and xxii 6-23, see Caird, IB, p. 1002, and Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 178.

But to Saul, such services reveal the perfidy of the priest and his house. "Their hand is also with David," concludes the king (v. 17). That I Samuel xxi 2-10 does not allude to the oracle draws even greater attention to it in the passage at hand. As Gressmann has observed, "In retelling an incident the Israelite narrator loves to insert new features to hold the attention of the hearer."[4]

The description of the massacre is relatively straightforward. The tradition does not moralize. Still, there is more than a hint of sacrilege in Saul's act, as is suggested by several references to the victims as "priests of the Lord" (vv. 17, 18, 21). Such phraseology should be viewed in light of later references to Saul as "the anointed of the Lord," a statement of the inviolability of his person. One may be sure that the writer recounts the insubordination of the Benjaminites with approval: "The servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord" (v. 17c). Only Doeg dares to carry out Saul's command, and he is an Edomite.

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[3] According to Caird, Doeg is lying about the oracle, and Ahimelech responds with a rhetorical question at v. 15a. What the priest really means, says Caird, is "Have I indeed inquired of God for him today?" (IB, p. 1002). The interpretation is ingenious but not very convincing.

[4] SAT, II:1, p. 91.

Abiathar, the lone survivor of the blood bath, hurries to David. Ahimelech's son is welcomed and consoled as David unhappily recalls the day he saw Doeg in the sanctuary and thought nothing of it. Using the word twice spoken in the death pronouncements on the priests (vv. 17, 18), David assures Abiathar that he takes full blame for the tragedy on himself. "I have encircled (סַבֹּתִי) [to death][5] all the persons of your father's house," says David (v. 22). The pregnant construction and unusual use of סבב in the causative sense fits the mood of the passage and also serves the writer's purpose. He is portraying David as a man whose kindness to Abiathar compensates for the deceitfulness and carelessness which helped to bring about the destruction of Nob. The concluding passage has David playing the part of a rescuer and friend to Nob. Now Abiathar need fear no more. "For he that seeks your life seeks my life,"[6] says David; "with me you shall be in safekeeping" (v. 23).

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[5] Cf. P. A. H. de Boer, Research into the Text of I Samuel xviii-xxxi, Vol. VI of the Oudtestamentishe Studien (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949), p. 43. (Hereafter referred to as de Boer, I Samuel xviii-xxxi.) Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 182, holds a different view. Like many critics, he prefers the LXX's "I am guilty of" to MT.

The First Battle Oracle: "Save Keilah" (xxiii 1-5)

When David hears of the Philistine assault on the city of Keilah,[1] he "inquires of the Lord" (v. 2a). The surprising thing is that, after receiving a favorable oracle, David is persuaded by his men to seek the Lord's will a second time. For Budde this is a sign of unbelief, understandable enough in David's men but incredible in our hero.[2] Thus Budde regards verses 3-4 as a later addition to the text.[3] Budde's separation of verses 3-4 from 1-2, 5 has not been accepted either on literary or historical grounds. Here and throughout the early tradition David is represented as a model of Hebrew piety, but he is hardly a fairyland prince, immune to the fears, passions, and errors of judgment that plague ordinary mortals. (Note, for example, David's inability to keep Joab under control; II. iii 26-39.) In xxiii 1-5 David makes a normal response to a common occurrence: the fear of soldiers prior to battle. "And David inquired of the Lord again" (v. 4a).

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[6] See BH, which follows LXX in reversing the order of "my life" and "your life."

[1] Keilah is usually identified with modern Khirbet Qila, 8-1/2 mi. NW of Hebron and 3 mi. S of the fortress (not "the cave") of Adullam (xxii 1, 4). See V. R. Gold, "Keilah," _IDB_, III, 5; Caird, _IB_, 1004. Cf. Hertzberg, _Samuel_, p. 190, who locates Keilah 6 mi. E of _bet jibrin_.

[2] Budde, _KHC_, p. 155.

[3] _Ibid._

This event may also indicate that the oracle in Israel is not a mechanical or magical device[4] but provides the possibility for genuine communication between the Hebrew and his god. On Israel's side it is not a vehicle whereby the deity is manipulated; one does not continue to inquire of the Lord until a propitious omen is received (xiv 37; xxviii 6).[5] On the Lord's side it is not a means whereby the course of history is unalterably fixed once the divine word is uttered. A favorable oracle does not render the Philistines impotent and the Hebrews invincible. Unlike the armies of Gideon in the hero saga of Judges 7, David's forces must fight for their victories. What is more, they take the risk of defeat, a fact that is candidly acknowledged in the present situation: "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" (v. 3).

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[4] S. H. Hooke defends the theology of divination among the ancients as follows: ". . . But the religious element underneath what seems wholly mechanical lies in the belief that the entire complicated nexus of events was brought about by the will of the gods, so that the method of trial and error might well reveal to man's groping mind what that will was." S. H. Hooke, Babylonian and Assyrian Religion ("Hutchinson's University Library," London: Hutchinson House, 1953), p. 91.

[5] When the Assyrian kings disliked the advice of the oracle, "they probably did not hesitate to follow their own judgment," says Marcus Jastrow, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria (Boston: Ginn and Company, The Athenaem Press, 1898), p. 346. In other instances when the augury was inauspicious, the priest of the ancient Near East tried a second or third time. This does not mean, however, that the diviner always produced the answer his sovereign wanted. "The fact remains that in the recorded liver examinations we find unfavorable conclusions quite as frequently as favorable." Marcus Jastrow, Aspects of Religious Belief and

It is, therefore, appropriate for David to call the previous oracle into question, to confess before the Lord that his men are afraid, and at the same time to ask for divine reassurance. The oracle is not an inexorable decree[6] but a divine promise of victory requiring for its accomplishment the full energies of David and his men. To the oracle David brings the uncertainties of his predictment; through the oracle the Lord dispels David's doubts and sends his troops on their way confident of success: "For I will give the Philistines into your hand" (v. 4b).

Practice in Babylonia and Assyria (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), p. 200.

[6] Cf. Johannes Pederson, Israel: Its Life and Culture, Vol. III-IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 455-56, 491. Hereafter referred to as Pedersen, Israel, III-IV.

The Second Oracle: Retreat from Keilah (xxiii 6-13)[1]

Saul's reaction to the news of David's victory at Keilah brews fresh trouble for our hero. Once again David has to decide whether to fight or to hide. This time he is instructed by the oracle to abandon Keilah because its citizens are unwilling to stand by David in the defense of their city. In fact, rather than chance a confrontation with Saul, Keilah will hand David over to his enemy. For this reason David has no choice but to leave the city immediately.

In the other oracles of I Samuel xvi-II Samuel v (excepting xxx 6-8) only David's petitions and the Lord's responses are preserved. Here, however, the structure of the oracle is as noteworthy as its purpose and results. First, David asks the priest to present the ephod, which is evidently a cultic object of some kind, possibly a representation of the deity.[2] The same procedure is followed at Ziklag (xxx 6) and earlier by Saul near Michmash (xiv 18). David then addresses the deity in formal language, acknowledging both the sovereignty of the Lord and the supplicant's humble status: "O Lord the God of Israel, thy servant . . ." (v. 10a). The plight of the army is now explained: "Thy servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account" (v. 10b). A question follows, accompanied by a repetition of the opening formula: "Will Saul come down, as thy servant has heard, O Lord, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant" (v. 11b).[3]

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[1] Verse 6, "When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, an ephod came down in his hand," is probably redactional. It interrupts a smooth transition from verse 5 to verse 7. It tells us that Abiathar joined David's troops at Keilah, a datum that is contradicted by xxii 20-23 (Contrast Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 191). It attempts to draw attention to the ephod, which is not the main interest of the passage that follows (vv. 7-13). The verse as it stands is probably a reflection on the meaning of Abiathar's escape. That the ephod accompanied the sole survivor of the Nob priesthood means that David, not Saul, will profit from its sacral powers. This reflection is, it is true, consonant with the author's design; however, the verse is not. Either it should be relocated or removed from the text. Cf. Budde, KHC, p. 151.

The oracle does not describe the precise role of the priest or the ephod. Nor does it indicate how the answers of the Lord were communicated.[4] From Saul's oracles at xiv 37-42 and xxviii 6 it has been supposed that the sacred lots, the Urim and Thummim, gave the answer.[5] This would explain why the questions can be answered either with a simple "yes" or "no" or else take the form of alternatives that can gradually be reduced to a single possibility (II Samuel ii 1 provides an example of both types). The verdict given by the lots is verbalized by the prophet or priest in charge,[6] who speaks on behalf of the deity. In the present instance David is advised, "He will come down" and "They will surrender you" (v. 11-12). This means that David is not to defend Keilah.

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[2] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, pp. 56-57 and Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p. 224.

[3] Verse 11's "Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand?" is a dittograph from verse 12. The question is omitted from both the LXX and 4QumSam^B. Cf. Cross, "The Oldest Manuscripts from Qumran," JBL, LXXIV, 169-170.

[4] Divining by the internal organs of a slain animal, a common practice among the Babylonians and Assyrians, was not adopted in Israel. Nor were their intricate systems of interpreting such omens ever popular with the Hebrews. Due to the influence of the Israelite prophets the revelation of the divine will was divorced from mechanical means at a relatively early period. Hosea, for example, sharply criticizes those who "inquire of a thing of wood" and "whose staff gives them oracles" (Hosea iv 12). To the

David himself actively participates in the oracular process. Although Abiathar presents the ephod, David

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classical prophets, of course, the disclosure of the Lord's will comes through the "word" or dabhar—a concept far more acceptable to the modern mind than that of the oracle.

[5] Speaking generally of the use of the sacred lots by the Romans and Greeks, T. C. Foote observes that "the ceremony was accompanied with prayer, and it was unquestionably believed that the Supreme Wisdom directed which lot should come forth, i.e., be drawn. The human element was, as far as possible, eliminated from the drawing . . . The statement that the lot was drawn by the priest is distinctly avoided, as though implying that God did not order it." T. C. Foote, "The Ephod," JBL, XXI:1 (1902), 26.

[6] ". . . Prophets, too, accompanied the armies in war as helpers of the commander. When both oracles and prophets were silent, all was lost (I Samuel 28, 6). The difference between the prophet and the priest was in the way they communicated with the powers behind. The prophet spoke out of the strength filling his own soul, the priest made the sacred objects speak by the force that pervaded them." (Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p. 159).

queries the Lord. "Then said David" precedes each petition (vv. 10, 12); this takes the place of "David inquired of the Lord," the standard expression of the other five oracles in "the Story of David's Rise." Earlier, in the Judges' traditions, "the people" inquire of the Lord, probably in solemn tribal assembly (Judges i 1, xx 18, 23, 27). Later, in the time of Ahab, professional prophets are in charge of the oracle (I Kings xxii).[7] They prophesy noisily while Zedekiah, with horns of iron on his head, mimes the gory defeat of the Syrian army. Ahab's function is to ask a question of the oracle; the prophets do the rest. During their performance Ahab sits on his throne, knowing full well what the response will be. How different is this from the oracles of David! "David inquired of the Lord" means that David takes part in, perhaps even dominates the proceedings. David retreats for the same reason that he advances—the oracle commands it.

The Wilderness Traditions of I Samuel xxiii 14-xxvi 25

xxiii 14-xxvi 25 is a collection of narratives which have their setting in the wilderness (מִדְבָּר) of Judah. This part of Palestine is described by Driver as "the rocky and desolate region . . . extending some 15 miles from W. to

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[7] Cf. John Gray, I & II Kings ("The Old Testament Library," Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 400-02. Hereafter referred to as Gray, I & II Kings.

E., and some 35 miles from N. to S. It begins in about the longitude of Ma'on and Carmel (xxiii 24, xxv 1), but becomes wilder and more desolate as it descends towards the Dead Sea."[1] Abundant references to such places as the midbar of Ziph,[2] and the midbar of En-gedi,[3] and the midbar of Ma'on[4] make it certain that these stories were circulated among the tribes who lived in this Judean wasteland. Not that all of the tribes would have been pleased by the roles assigned to them by the tradition, for the Ziphites are spies, and the Calebites are the butt of some disparaging remarks made about Nabal (whose name means "folly"). Nonetheless, innuendo of this type would be expected from the rival Judean clans, who surely saw to it that these stories were preserved. From these wilderness traditions the writer extracted source materials for the composition of the second part of "the Condottiere" (xxiii 14-xxvi 25).

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[1] Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 186.

[2] Ziph is a town of Judah in the hill country province of Ma'on, 9 mi. SE of Hebron. See V. R. Gold, "Ziph," IDB, IV, 960.

[3] En-gedi: SW shore of the Dead Sea, 35 mi. SE of Jerusalem. Cf. V. R. Gold, "En-gedi," IDB, II, 101.

[4] Ma'on is identified with modern Tell Ma'in, 8-1/2 mi. S. of Hebron and 4-1/2 mi. S. of Ziph. "It is situated on a high, isolated hilltop," says Gold, ". . . and may have served to protect the fields in the small plains around it" (IDB, III, 261).

However, Klaus Koch[5] is persuaded that the sagas of xxiii 14-xxvi 25 would have held a special appeal to the soldiers who had marched up and down the midbar with David. Not only were these men familiar with the terrain, but famous landmarks such as "the Rock of Escape" (xxiii 28) and the "Wildgoats' Rocks" (xxiv 3) would have been associated in their memories with past wilderness campaigns. Moreover, the depiction of Saul and David as warriors in the company of their men creates a "military atmosphere," which, according to Koch, is maintained throughout these narratives.[6] The fortitude of David and Saul is put to the test, as is the courage and alertness of the men. Each character is portrayed in terms of strict black-and-white distinctions. Thus Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai are singled out for their bravery, while Abner and his soldiers are rebuked for allowing the enemy to slip by them in the dark. The real villains of the piece are the Ziphites, who betray David's hiding place, and the churlish Nabal, who violates an unwritten code of the wilderness by refusing to share his harvest with the freebooters who had respected his property and protected his herds. Koch believes that the Sitz im Leben for these narratives was the campfire or garrison where professional soldiers gathered to tell of their heroes' exploits.[7] But whether David's men or the Judean clans living in the wilderness were responsible for these sagas, the narrators were well acquainted with the *midbar*.

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[5] Cf. Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte?, pp. 148-167.

[6] Ibid., p. 157.

Aside from the interest in memorable places and military heroes, a more edifying theme runs through the stories of xxiii 14-xxvi 25. Like the "flight and escape" cycle (xix 11-24; xxi 11-16),[8] the wilderness cycle reminds the hearer of Saul's continuous pursuit: "Saul seeks him" or "Saul seeks his life" (xxiii 14, 15, 25; xxiv 3, 12; xxv 29; xxvi 2). Saul does not stop until David departs from the land. Unlike the flight and escape traditions, however, "the Condottiere" makes it clear that Saul's seeking after David is being counteracted by the activity of Yahweh. Indeed, the Lord does more than protect David from his pursuer. Divine providence gives Saul into David's hands (xxiv 5, 10, 18; xxvi 8, 23).[9] This theme is summed up at xxiii 14b: "And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand." Some regard this text as a later theological accretion;[10] if so, it articulates an idea already present in the early tradition (cf. xxv 29, e.g.).

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[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Cf. *supra*, pp. 35

[9] Cf. Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte*?, p. 165.

[10] Cf. Budde, *KHC*, *ad loc*; Caird, *IB*, p. 1006.

The exact contents and organization of the wilderness traditions are not easy to determine. Almost certainly, the narrative of Jonathan's visit to David at Horesh (xxiii 16-18) was not included. In this pericope David appears to be alone (as in chapters xix-xxi), but in the other narratives from chapter xxii on, David is always accompanied by his men.[11] Then too, verse 17b, "You shall be king over Israel," is spoken with the events of II Samuel ii-v in mind. This suggests that the entire passage at verses 16-18 was added by the writer.[12] The two remaining narratives in chapter xxiii 19-28 (the Ziphite conspiracy, the hot chase in Ma'on) are somehow connected with subsequent events. The story of David and Abigail (xxv), which also takes place in Ma'on, was probably continuous with xxiii 24b-28 at one time (the account of David's last minute escape near a famous landmark).[13] On this assumption, the pressure put on Saul by the Philistine army (xxiii 27-28) would account for the relative calm enjoyed by David in chapter xxv. This raises a second question: did Saul's second meeting with the Ziphites follow directly upon xxiii 19-24a in an earlier form of the tradition?[14] (Does xxvi 1 presuppose a previous agreement with the informers?) Such questions have no definitive answer; they do point up the problems in an attempt to go behind the present text to the earliest tradition.

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[11] Cf. Eissfeldt, Komposition, ad loc.

[12] Cf. Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte?, p. 164.

[13] Cf. Budde, KHC, p. 157; Steuernagel, Lehrbuch, p. 320. For a criticism of Budde's argument, see M. H. Segal, "Studies in the Book of Samuel," JQR, VIII (1917), 83.

The key to the material is provided by the traditions relating David's magnanimity toward Saul. Recent literary[15] and traditio-historical[16] studies are agreed that neither chapter xxiv nor xxvi represents the original story. Both go back to an earlier tradition, the main elements of which can be seen in a comparison of chapters xxiv and xxvi[17] and can be summarized as follows: 1) Saul falls into David's hands while pursuing him in the wilderness of Judah; 2) David spares Saul's life; and 3) Saul is thereby persuaded that David is a righteous man and resolves to leave him in peace.

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[14] Cf. Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch*, p. 320; Hertzberg, *Samuel*, p. 207.

[15] Nübel, *Davids Aufstieg*, p. 41.

[16] Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte?*, p. 157. With Budde, however, Koch maintains that the En-gedi narrative is older than the Ziphite tradition (xxvi). Many critics disagree. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, pp. 264-65, Smith (*ICC*, p. 213, 216), Driver, (*Introduction*, p. 181), Kennedy (*NCB*, p. 157), Gressmann (*SAT*, II:1, p. 98), *et al*. regard chapter xxvi as an earlier and more authentic report than chapter xxiv.

[17] Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte?*, pp. 159-161, enumerates the similarities and differences between the two narratives.

Soon the story was popular enough to gain currency in two forms, one native to En-gedi (xxiv 2) and the other, to Ziph (xxvi 1). The En-gedi tradition endeared itself to many hearers on account of its earthy humor;[18] Saul answers the call of nature and in this way exposes himself to David, who is hiding in the same cave. In the other account, David's opportunity for vengeance comes as a result of a daring incursion into Saul's camp (xxvi 6 ff.), which adds to the heroic stature of David[19] and would attract another kind of audience for this reason (soldiers,[20] perhaps). The different forms of the same episode were produced during the second stage of the growth of this tradition.

In the third stage, the two traditions localized at En-gedi and Ziph are taken over and developed in accord with the interests of the Jerusalem palace.[21] The evidences of change are unmistakable in the quantity and character of the speeches. In most of the preceding pericopes, the conversation is crisp and terse. But beginning with David's speech to Saul at xxiv 10, the characters repeat, expand, and often labor their points, not unlike the young David of chapter xvii.[22] In chapter xxiv David harangues Saul, and Saul apologizes profusely; this takes fourteen of twenty-two verses in this pericope. David's lectures to Abishai, Abner, and Saul in chapter xxvi fill nineteen of thirty lines of Hebrew (verses 9-25). The preponderance of dialogue is also noticeable in chapter xxv, where Abigail's plea for Nabal continues uninterrupted for fourteen and one-half lines in the *Biblia Hebraica*. The narrators responsible for these passages are not content to state an idea, then move on to the next. On the contrary, the fact that David did not kill Saul and Nabal needs to be explained in such detail that no reader can miss the point. Statements have become speeches, and speeches have become homilies.

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[18] Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 96.

[19] Koch, Was ist Formgeschichte?, p. 160.

[20] Ibid, p. 161.

[21] Ibid, p. 157, 167.

That the Jerusalem court was the *Sitz im Leben* in which these changes took place is indicated by the style of the speeches. The conversation between King Saul and his subjects is quite formal, as Koch has noted,[23] and not at all what one would expect from the folk narratives of the Judean wilderness. Saul is addressed by the honorific titles, "my lord and king" and "my father" (xxiv 9, 12;

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[22] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel* ("Abhandlung zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments," ed. W. Eichrodt and O. Cullmann; Zurich: Zwingli, 1951), p. 47. Von Rad notes eighteen instances of direct discourse in I Samuel xvii. Hereafter referred to as von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg*.

[23] Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte?*, p. 157-58.

xxvi 15, 16, 17, 18). When David rebukes Saul, he does so in the stylized language of a petitioner standing before the throne of an oriental monarch, which is hardly the situation of the rustic kingship at Gibeah.[24] "It is my voice, my lord, O king," says David; "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? . . . Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant" (xxvi 17-19). The extreme politeness and polish in the wording of remonstrances and rebukes extends even to the imparting of information to the king. Note the rhetorical question with which the rural Ziphite delegation tells Saul where David and his men are hiding:[25] "Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon?" (xxvi 1; cf. xxiii 19). Such formality in the presence of the sovereign belongs to the ceremony of the Jerusalem palace,[26] not to the usage of the clans of Ziph.

The reasons for Jerusalem's interest in the wilderness narratives are disclosed by the content of the speeches. David is unwilling to harm Saul, we are told, because the king is the Lord's anointed and his person is inviolable (xxiv 6 ff; xxvi 9 ff.). This idea is not peculiar to the royal theology but has no doubt been elaborated in that connection, the main purpose being to set the king apart from the people and to protect him from would-be assassins. Doing violence to the king is interpreted as a crime against Yahweh. Moreover, since David did not take matters into his own hands either in his treatment of Saul or Nabal, the argument continues, he is innocent of bloodguilt and his rule is approved by Yahweh. ("Anyone who anticipates the will of the Lord is not his elect.")[27] The issue of bloodguilt is particularly important, for the people of Israel believe that a house founded on bloodshed will be undone by the same. Shimei, for instance, says that Absalom's rebellion against David is divine retribution for the elimination of Saul's sons[28] (II. xvi 8). In a later period (ca. 842 B.C.) Jehu justifies the slaughter of Ahab's family on the grounds that the house of Omri was infected with the blood of Naboth (II Kings viii 26; cf. I Kings xxi 21).

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[24] Cf. Caspari, _KAT_, pp. 291-92.

[25] Koch, _Was ist Formgeschichte?_, p. 158.

[26] _Ibid_, pp. 157, 167.

Now we begin to see why the wilderness traditions were taken over and elaborated by the Jerusalem palace.

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[27] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 378.

[28] On the execution of Saul's sons, see *infra*, pp. 201-02. Wellhausen thinks that the elimination of the previous monarch's family is a matter of course in Israel (cf. II. xix 28 and *Prolegomena*, p. 266, n. 2). Cf. Arvid S. Kapelrud, "King and Fertility: A Discussion of II Samuel 21:1-14," *Interpretationes ad Vetus Testamentum Pertinentes Sigmundo Mowinkel Septuagenario Messae*, ed. N. A. Dahl and A. S. Kapelrud (Oslo: Fabritus & Sonner, 1955), pp. 119-20.

Stories which were originally told primarily for entertainment have become vehicles for the official Davidic ideology. The sparing of Saul, not once but twice, exhibits David's worthiness; even Saul says as much (xxiv 17 ff; xxvi 21 ff.). Bloodguilt and the Lord's promise cannot be reconciled; this is Abigail's message to David (xxv 26 ff.). David and his line must be free of the evils of bloodguilt and sacrilege from which only additional bloodletting and rebellion can result. With these doctrines in view, the speeches of David, Saul, and Abigail have been shaped.[29]

The dogmatic interests of the court traditions, which are expressed in the final form of the wilderness cycle (xxiii 14-xxvi 25), are shared by the writer of "David's Rise." The two accounts of David's meetings with Saul (xxiv; xxvi) are included in the original writing for ideological reasons and have been set side by side without tying them together.[30] One would expect some allusion in chapter xxvi to the earlier episode at En-gedi, since Saul makes essentially the same promises to David in both places. David does not remind Saul that he has gone back on his word, but apparently the omission serves a purpose. In chapter xxvi David avoids harsh, blunt accusations against the king, going out of his way to give Saul the benefit of the doubt (cf. verses 18-20). David's attitude is astonishing under the circumstances; however, this can be seen as another indication of David's reverence for Saul. An unpleasant reminder of the worthlessness of Saul's promises, citing as evidence the happening at En-gedi, does not fit the mood of xxvi 18-20.

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[29] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, pp. 98-100.

[30] Cf. Rost and Sellin, Einleitung^8, p. 91.

This passage also strongly hints of David's plan for the future, providing a clear connection between chapter xxvi and the following developments. In xxvi 19-20 David speaks of the possibility that he will have to leave his native land. If he remains, either he will have to kill Saul or be killed by him. Hence, the second meeting with Saul appears to bring on the decision recorded at the beginning of "the Vassal Prince" (xxvii ff.). David is forced to depart from Israel for the territory of the Philistines, lest he "perish one day at the hand of Saul" (xxvii 1).

Saul Seeks Him Continually (xxiii 14-xxiv 1)[1]

From the moment David gathered his band at Adullam Saul plots their destruction. At Saul's command the supposed collaborators at Nob are put to death. Saul strikes dread into the hearts of the citizens of Keilah, giving notice of stern reprisals against any towns foolish enough to shelter David. In the three episodes under discussion Saul is determined to track David down. "David was afraid[2] because Saul had come out to seek his life" (v. 15a) introduces the Jonathan pericope (vv. 16-18). Next the Ziphites offer to spy on David (vv. 19-24a), and the king reaffirms his resolve to capture the condottiere: "If he is in the land, I will search him out" (v. 23c). In the third pericope (vv. 24b-xxiv 1) only an urgent message telling of a Philistine invasion of Israel allows David to make his escape from Saul.

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[1] English: I Samuel xxiii 14-29.

The main point of the initial pericope (vv. 16-18) is the proleptic utterance[3] at verse 17: "You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you," says Jonathan. The prediction is produced in accord with the narrative interests of our author and represents an elaboration of the earlier story of Jonathan's association with David (I. xix 1-7; xx; and II.i 17-27). The basis of the alliance between David and the son of Saul is actually politics, according to Gressmann.[4] He believes that Jonathan and David were planning to oust Saul and to take over the government.

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[2] See BH.

[3] See _supra_, p. 70.

[4] Gressmann, _SAT_, II:1, p. 90.

Their agreement is spelled out in the second part of Jonathan's statement, "And I shall be next to you."

However, the possibility that Jonathan was conspiring with David against Saul is remote.[5] Although Jonathan quarreled with Saul and urged him to reestablish his ties with David, there is nothing to suggest that Jonathan betrayed Saul. Apparently, Jonathan returned to Gibeah and stayed there (xxiii 18). Jonathan fights at his father's side on Mount Gilboa and dies on the same battlefield with Saul (xxxi). David himself attests the continuing loyalty of Jonathan to Saul: "In life and in death they were not divided" (II. i 23b).

At the time of Jonathan's visit and for an unspecified period thereafter, David's retreat is the rocky crags, hills, and cave-infested wilds of Judah.[6] David hides in the highlands and lurking places of Ziph (vv. 14-15, 19, 23), the lowlands[7] south of Jeshimon (v. 24), and the strongholds of Horesh and En-gedi (vv. 19; xxiv 1). One familiar crag,

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[5] Morgenstern has seen in verse 17 an indication that beena marriage was practiced in Israel. He argues that David became the legitimate heir of Saul just as soon as he married Michal and that Jonathan's prediction merely recognized this fact. Cf. Julius Morgenstern, "David and Jonathan," JBL, LXXVIII (December, 1959), 322-25. Cf. the rebuttal of Caird (IB, p. 1043).

[6] Cf. supra, p. 66.

[7] The "Arabah" is here "synonymous with the eastern declivity of the hill" of Jeshimon; so Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 192, n. e.

"the Rock of Escape" (v. 28), is named for its association with the narrowest of David's escapes.[8] But the incident is not told solely to provide information about the landmark. The numerous references to David's hideouts and constantly shifting positions have a wider purpose: to create in the reader's mind an image of Saul's unflagging pursuit after David and Yahweh's unfailing protection.

David Avoids Sacrilege (xxiv 2-23)[1]

Chapter xxiv is obviously based on the same material as chapter xxvi.[2] Both begin with informers giving away David's hideout; Saul leads three thousand soldiers into the wilderness to find David; and so on.[3] However, chapter xxiv is in several respects a more exaggerated version of the original material than is chapter xxvi.[4] The awe David shows for Saul in chapter xxvi is carried a bit further in chapter xxiv. It is a sin to cut off a piece of the king's robe, much less to harm his person (v. 6). Paradoxically, David's irritation with Saul, muted by the indirect language of xxvi 17-20, is plainly expressed in chapter xxiv (vv. 13 ff.). Saul's blessing on David, the climax of both narratives, is more grandiose in chapter xxiv. Saul asks Yahweh to safeguard David's life in chapter xxvi, but in chapter xxiv Saul names David as his successor: "Now I know you shall be king" (v. 21). How Saul arrived at this conclusion is the subject of this narrative.

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[8] Ibid, p. 194.

[1] English: I Samuel xxiv 1-22.

[2] See supra, p. 71.

[3] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 207.

[4] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, pp. 95-100, passim.

The story begins with Saul in an extremely vulnerable position. By accident he has chosen to relieve himself in the cave in which David and his men are hiding. Unnoticed by Saul, they watch him silently from within the dark recesses of the cave. "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you,'" (v. 5) whisper David's companions. Without a sound David moves behind the squatting figure of Saul. But, to the surprise of his men, David does not harm Saul. Instead, he contents himself with a piece of cloth torn from the king's robe.

At this point most critics are surprised by the abrupt departure of verses 5-8 from the sequence of chapter xxvi.[5] In chapter xxvi David first prevents his men from killing Saul (vv. 9-10); then he takes the spear and the water jug, which will later be used to prove his good will towards Saul (vv. 11-12). In chapter xxiv David first appropriates the skirt of Saul's robe (v. 5b); only then does he tell his men why Saul must not be harmed (v. 7). Thus the order is reversed. The problem is complicated by the addition of a detail in chapter xxiv that has no parallel in chapter xxvi: David's conscience hurts him because "he had cut off Saul's skirt" (v. 6b).

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[5] See infra, notes 6-9.

Many scholars attempt to solve these problems by deleting or transposing parts of verses 5-8. Smith views verses 5b-6 as an interpolation.[6] Hertzberg strikes out verse 6b and rewrites the rest.[7] Cornhill thinks that the original order was 5a, 7-8a, 5b-6, 8b,[8] a hypothesis that has won wide acceptance.[9] The advantage of the rearrangement is that it follows the order of the other narrative (xxvi). The fallacy is the assumption that chapter xxiv was intended to parallel its sister narrative in this way. Such notions should be dispelled by the obvious freedom with which chapter xxiv embellishes old motifs and introduces new ones, e.g., the hyper-sensitive reaction of David's conscience.

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[6] Smith, ICC, pp. 217-18. Cf. Budde's alternative (KHC, p. 161). Contrast Segal's criticisms of both, "Studies in the Books of Samuel," JQR, VIII (1917-18), p. 80.

[7] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 196. In the Masoretic text David's conscience begins to smart after he tears Saul's robe. But according to the revised text of Hertzberg, David's conscience cries out to keep David from killing Saul. Moreover, in Hertzberg's text David never touches Saul or his robe. Consequently, this revision has the effect of harmonizing xxiv 5-8 with xxvi 6-12. There is every reason to suspect, however, that the narrator of chapter xxiv had no intention of reproducing chapter xxvi—despite the fact that the motifs of the two narratives are essentially the same.

[8] Carl Cornill, Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, trans. G. H. Box ("Theological Translation Library," Vol. XXIII; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), p. 195.

As a consequence both of its position and of its contents, verse 6 is the crucial text.[10] "Because he had cut off Saul's skirt," comments the narrator, "David's heart smote him." In chapter xxvi David turns away from an act of regicide, but in chapter xxiv he recoils from an act that is trivial by comparison. Does this mean that the Lord forbids David to touch Saul, much less to attack him? Are these tremors of conscience warnings against the slightest violation of the Lord's prerogatives? Apparently they are, so extreme is the point of view being expressed by this passage. In fact, the juxtaposition of verse 7 with verse 6 makes it possible to see a double-entendre in the following exclamation: "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed" (v. 7). Is David here confessing regret that he has done "this thing" already, i.e., cut off the skirt of Saul's robe?[11] If so, the exaggeration is carried one step further in verse 8a: "David tore his men with words," a metaphor so strong that many commentators have suggested emendations to tone it down.[12]

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[9] Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 193; Kennedy, NCB, p. 159; Nowack, HKAT, p. 121; Budde, KHC, p. 161; Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 362, and Caird, IB, pp. 1008-09. For a different approach see Carlson, David, the chosen King, pp. 208-10.

[10] Cf. Carlson, David, the chosen King, who also accounts for the present position of vv. 5b-6 on the basis of an "ideological motive" (p. 210). Carlson compares David's act with Saul's at xv 27, where the king accidentally tears the robe of Samuel and incurs the prophet's wrath (p. 209). Cf. also Gressman's discussion of the Old Testament view of clothing as a part of the self (SAT, II:1, p. 75).

The fundamental dogma is this: to trifle with Saul is to trifle with Yahweh. That Saul is trying desperately to kill David does not matter. Saul is still the Lord's, and the Lord alone will judge him.[13] Tearing Saul's garment is for this reason a dangerous and ominous act, an invasion of Yahweh's holiness.[14] This, it must be admitted, goes beyond the more temperate reflections of chapter xxvi.

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[11] Cf. Segal, "Studies in the Books of Samuel," JQR, VIII (1917-18), p. 80: "Further we may ask, how did the writer divine that David had felt in his heart remorse for cutting off the skirt of Saul's mantle (v. 6), unless David had evinced this feeling by some speech or act, as is really the case in our present text, where he gives expression to this feeling by his speech in verse 7?" See supra, n. 6.

[12] Cf. Thenius, וישׁבת, "and he made them desist" (KeH^2, p. 112); Dr. Weir, וימנע, "and he restrained them" or וישׁקט, "and he calmed them" (See Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 193). Wellhausen, on the other hand, thinks that בּדברים indicates a figurative sense for וישׁסע (Text der Samuelis, p. 130).

[13] Cf. Karl Gutbrod, Das Buch vom König: Das Erste Buch Samuel ("Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments," Vol. XI, Part 1; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1959), p. 198. Hereafter referred to as Gutbrod, BAT, XI:1.

In the first part of his speech to Saul (vv. 9-12), David is exceedingly polite. As was indicated earlier (p. 74), David's language reflects the formal usage of the Jerusalem court. He prostrates himself on the ground before the king, addressing Saul as "my lord" and "my father." However, the mood of verses 13-16 is somewhat harsher toward Saul.[15] In chapter xxvi David curses those who have egged Saul on (v. 19). Here David calls down a judgment on Saul himself (v. 13). The proverb that follows, "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness," is quite vindictive (v. 14). But verse 14 is usually regarded as secondary, a view that is borne out by the redundant gloss at the end[16] ("But my hand shall not be against you;" cf. v. 13b). With regard to the proverb, H. P. Smith writes: "We can hardly suppose that our original writer, who makes David show such deep respect for Saul, to put such an intimation into David's mouth."[17]

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[14] See _supra_, n. 8.

[15] Cf. Gressmann, _SAT_, II:1, p. 96.

[16] Budde, _KHC_, _ad loc_. Cf. Caird, _IB_, p. 1010.

[17] Smith, _ICC_, p. 219.

The judgment that David demands "between you and me" is in effect given by the speech of Saul.[18] David's act convinces Saul that David is a righteous man and that Yahweh will reward him with the kingship. But, seeing David as the future king, Saul fears for the safety of his sons. "Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house" (v. 22).[19] Saul has good reason for his anxiety, as the later policies of David's government will prove.[20] Nonetheless, Saul dares to hope that the man who had shown such a generous spirit in the wilderness of En-gedi would do so again.

David Restrained by Abigail from Bloodguilt (xxv 1b-44)[1]

Nowhere in "the Story of David's Rise" are ideology and narrative more skillfully interwoven than in the story of David and Abigail. The events of xxv 1b-44 are fast moving and arresting; the characters are flesh and blood. Even the didactic sentiments of verses 24-34 seem unaffected and natural in their context. In these verses David is not only captivated by Abigail's charms but also convinced that her prophetic insights are true. He is the future king. He is not a man of blood. This is the mainspring of Abigail's argument[2] and the premise on which this narrative proceeds.

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[18] Cf. Gutbrod, BAT, XI;1, p. 200.

[19] Budde thinks that vv. 21-23 are redactional (KHC, p. 163), an argument that has won few adherents. Cf. the objections of Nowack and Smith, ad loc.

[20] See infra, pp. 200 ff.

[1] Verse 1a is almost universally viewed as a gloss. Cf. Budde (KHC, Caspari (KAT), and Hertzberg (Samuel)—ad loc—who put forward various interpretations of the verse in this context.

From the stronghold (xxiv 23) David moves to the wilderness of Ma'on[3] (xxv 1b). Here he takes refuge with his men near the estate of Nabal, husband of Abigail. The action begins when it is reported to David that Nabal is shearing his sheep (v. 4). For a rich landholder like Nabal, this means a lavish feast is to be prepared. For David and his men, this report is tantamount to an invitation. "Sheep-shearing was a festival when the owners were expected to be generous and hospitable."[4]

Ten youths are selected to approach Nabal on behalf of David and his men. Expecting no trouble, David commands them to convey their message with warmth and respect: "And thus you shall salute him: 'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have'" (v. 6). Their request is reasonable and businesslike, In exchange for the protection afforded to Nabal's flocks by David and his troops, David asks for a share of Nabal's bounty. "For we come on a feast day," they say; we are "your servants," and we represent "your son David" (v. 8c). No specific item or amount is suggested, only "whatever you have at hand" (v. 8c).

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[2] Speaking of Abigail's speech, Hertzberg concludes, "The main concern of the compiler makes itself felt here" (Samuel, p. 204).

[3] See BH.

[4] Caird, IB, p. 1011.

Nabal's reply is insulting and selfish. "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?" he demands (v. 10a). "Shall I take _my_ bread and _my_ water and _my_ meat that _I_ have killed for _my_ shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where? [italics mine]" he raves. Nabal does not bother to inquire into the truth of David's statements. Was it true that Nabal's servants "missed nothing, all the time they were in Carmel" (v. 7) and that they came to no harm? How many soldiers does David command? Nabal is too "churlish" or too "foolish" to ask.

David's fury is well understood by the reader. The condottiere cannot tolerate such abuse from Nabal, and what is more, David and his men depend on the supplies that were donated by the sheepholders of the _midbar_. So the "evil" that Nabal does to David is not qualitatively different from that intended by Saul. Both threaten David's life, and both are denounced in similar words: "He has returned me evil for good" (v. 21; cf. xxiv 18). Vengeance is therefore expected and required (vv. 15-16; 24). The question is whether a purge of Nabal's house is an action acceptable to

Yahweh.

Under the spell of the gracious and diplomatic Abigail, David's wrath speedily subsides. "Upon me alone, my lord, be the guilt," she begins; "let not my lord regard this ill-natured fellow, Nabal" (vv. 24-25). In the first part of her speech (vv. 24-27) Abigail shifts the focus of attention from the folly of Nabal to her own discretion. Seven times in her appeal she pictures herself as David's "handmaid" or "servant"; twelve times she addresses David as "my lord" (vv. 24-31). She freely acknowledges the gravity of her husband's offense and implores David to look upon this as her "guilt" and her "trespass" (vv. 24, 28). By the time Abigail produces the asses laden with ready dressed sheep, bread, fruit, and wine in verse 27, David's heart is already captive. He is ready to accept her gift and go on his way. But Abigail's speech is only half completed.

Abigail's sudden shift from plea to prophecy in verses 28b-31 betrays the ideational directions which the official theology has superimposed upon this narrative.[5] The beautiful woman pleading for her husband's life in verses 24-27 becomes the medium of revelation in verses 28b-31. Like Saul at En-gedi (xxiv 21) and Jonathan at

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[5] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 227; Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 203; and Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, p. 51.

Horesh (xxiii 17), Abigail anticipates a grand reversal in David's fortunes: the Lord will appoint him "prince over Israel"[6] (v. 30). Likewise, David in verses 32-34 receives Abigail's revelation before he acknowledges her present of foodstuffs. Hence, between the offering of Abigail's gift at verse 27 and its acceptance at verse 35, seven verses of direct discourse intervene. This is enough to persuade a number of scholars that the extended speeches of chapter xxv were "expanded from a simpler form."[7] It was argued above (pp. 72-74) that the earlier material was taken over by the Jerusalem palace and came to the writer from this source.

Whether it is possible to isolate the ingredients of the early folk narrative so precisely as some have attempted is another matter.[8] Distinctions on the basis of vocabulary or phraseology are difficult to maintain.[9] The ideas expressed in verses 26-34, except for the references to David as the future king, are more-or-less germane. Still, the text as it stands is much too argumentative, much too anxious over the destiny of David's house to have been produced in its entirety by the folk narrators of Judah. Abigail appears more concerned about David's future than about Nabal's. David must curb his desire for vengeance, lest there be for him some "cause of stumbling[10] or remorse, for having shed blood without cause or for my lord taking vengeance himself (v. 31).[11]

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[6] According to Carlson (David, the chosen King, pp. 52-54), the term nagid in this passage may owe its origin to the deuteronomic historian. "This apparently has to do with the fact that it [nagid] has fewer overtones as compared with the term maelaek in the royalist complex of ideas, not least in the Deuteronomic contexts, cf. Deut. 17:14-20, I Samuel 8, 12, etc." (p. 54). The nagid idea is, however, much older than Deuteronomy—as Carlson admits—and as Martin Noth has argued in his "David und Israel in 2. Samuel 7," Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament (2d ed. with appendix; Vol. VI of "Theologische Bücherei"; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1960), pp. 339-340. (Hereafter referred to as Noth, Gesammelte Studien.) For a more detailed discussion of nagid, see infra, pp. 171-74.

[7] Smith, ICC, p. 227. Cf. Segal (JQR, VIII, 82), whose conclusions are equally general: the author "utilized some older written materials, from which he derived the most characteristic portions of the narrative."

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[8] Nübel believes that the author of the revised version of the Abigail narrative added vv. 26, 28b-30, 32-34 (Davids Aufstieg, p. 51).

[9] Expressions such as "this day" (vv. 32, 33), "the Lord the God of Israel" (vv. 33, 34), "prince over Israel" (v. 30), and "your God" (v. 29) Nübel assigns to the "Redactional Document" (Davids Aufstieg, pp. 108-09). In Nübel's Grundschrift the word "Yahweh" occurs largely in formulas of oath, curse, and blessing (p. 107).

[10] Aquila, the Vulgate, and Hieronymous render the hapax legomenon, פּוּקָה, as "sobbing," a nuance doubtless inspired by the following expression, מִכְשׁוֹל לֵב (lit., "a stumbling of heart"). This in turn has led to English translations more subjective than the Hebrew warrants, e.g., "grief" (KJV); "qualm" (Smith, ICC, p. 226); and "cause of grief" (RSV). The verb פּוּק however, means "to totter" or "to stagger" (Is. xxviii 7; Jer. x 4, and Nah. ii 11). Hence the noun פּוּקָה should suggest "cause of tottering" or "cause of staggering" (Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 202). If, as Wellhausen proposes, MT's לֵב should be deleted with Codex Vaticanus, a still more objective meaning results: bloodletting for David is a skandalon, i.e., an offense or an impediment to success (Text der Samuelis, p. 134). De Vaux's translation is loose but suggestive: "Que ce ne soit pas pour toi un trouble et un

There is more to this vision. Abigail predicts that "the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house" (v. 28b), a theme the origins of which can be traced to the early period of the Davidic dynasty. The royal cultus or the court of Solomon was responsible for introducing and popularizing dynastic thinking in Israel. The basic concepts and terminology were probably borrowed from the Egyptian "Königsnovelle," as Hermann[12] and Noth[13] have recently held. In verse 28c Abigail goes on to explain that David's house will continue "because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord; and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live."[14] This is a warning as well as a promise. With the assurance of good things from Yahweh comes the admonition not to take his commandments lightly. This coincides with

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remords d'avoir verse en vain le sang ..." R. de Vaux, *Les Livres de Samuel* ("La Sainte Bible," Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1961), p. 126. Hereafter referred to as de Vaux, *LStB*.)

[11] Omit לַאדֹנִי with Wellhausen (*Text der Samuelis*, p. 134) and de Vaux (*LStB*, p. 126). See BH for other emendations adopted here.

[12] Siegfried Hermann, "Die Königsnovelle in Ägypten und in Israel," *Wissenchaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl Marx Universität* Leipzig III (1953-54), 51-62.

[13] Noth, *Gesammelte Studien*, 342-43.

[14] Cf. *infra*, p. 213.

the teaching of the deuteronomic history but is hardly as late as this work.[15]

What Abigail means by "evil" is made plain by the context. First, to commit evil is to kill or to inflict bodily injury. The denominative has this meaning in verse 34: the Lord has prevented David "from hurting you" (מֵהָרַע אֹתָךְ). The noun is also translated "hurt" at xxiv 9: "Why do you listen to those who say 'David seeks your hurt?'" The same notion is possible in other occurrences of רָעָה at xxiv 12, xxvi 18, and xxv 39, although the Revised Standard Version prefers "wrong," "guilt," and "evil" in these passages. In the present text Abigail undoubtedly identifies "evil" with "shedding blood without cause" (v. 31) and "entering into blood" (v. 26). Jonathan has already made the same point with Saul, urging him not "to sin against innocent blood" (xix 5). Bloodguilt is a mortgage on the future, paid in "turmoil and remorse"[16] (v. 31), that neither Saul nor David can afford.

The second connotation of "evil," as brought out by Abigail's speech, is "saving oneself with one's own hand" (לְהוֹשִׁיעַ יַד לִי v. 31; cf. vv. 26, 33). This is the opposite of "fighting the battles of the Lord" (v. 28b);

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[15] See *supra*, p. 90, n. 6.

[16] Lit., "a staggering and a stumbling of heart." Cf. de Vaux's translation, *supra*, n. 10.

thus the two clauses, v. 28b and v. 28c, illuminate each other. One cannot guard his own interests and the Lord's at the same time. To attempt to do so is to abandon the Lord's plan, to "avenge oneself with one's own hand" (RSV); hence, to commit evil. So understood, resisting evil and relying on the Lord are two sides of the same coin. Both are indispensable to the establishment of a "sure house."

Finally, verses 32-42 might be entitled, "David's Blessing." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who has sent you this day to meet me," says David to Abigail (v. 32). "Blessed be your discretion and blessed be you," he continues (v. 33a). The gift offered by Abigail in verse 27 is also called a "blessing,"[17] an unusual but appropriate word under the circumstances. In the words of Abigail David hears the voice of the Lord. In Abigail's act David perceives a divine restraint. "From bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand," exults David, you "have kept me this day" (v. 33b). The following morning Nabal dies of apoplexy, and again David gives thanks: "Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from evil; the Lord has returned the evil-doing of Nabal upon his own head" (v. 39). With Nabal dead, David invites Abigail to become his wife. She accepts and with this the blessing seems complete.

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[17] בְּרָכָה means "gift" also at xxx 6; Gen. xxxiii 11; Jos. xv 19; Judges i 15, and II Kings v 15.

Two final items are appended, however, (vv. 43-44). The first, David's marriage to Ahinoam of Jezreel, sustains the note of blessing. But the second, the loss of Michal to Palti of Gallim, brings us back to the uncertainties of David's existence in the wilderness. "It should not be forgotten for a moment," writes Hertzberg, "that the danger threatening from Saul has not been lifted."[18]

David Avoids Sacrilege a Second Time (xxvi 1-25)

Structurally, chapter xxvi is superior to chapter xxiv.[1] The logistics are more carefully plotted, and the action is livelier. In chapter xxvi, for example, David begins to speak at a safe distance from Saul, thus protecting himself from a surprise attack.[2] In chapter xxiv, however, this detail is omitted. Chapter xxiv consists largely of an introduction (vv. 2-8) and two repetitious speeches (vv. 9-16; 17-22), but chapter xxvi moves briskly from a more detailed introduction (vv. 1-5) to successive confrontations of David with Abishai (vv. 6-11), Abner (vv. 13-16), and Saul (vv. 17-25). All three are composed of varied and animated dialogue.

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[18] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 205.

[1] Although chapter xxvi is a better constructed and more restrained interpretation of David's awe in the presence of the Lord's anointed, this narrative is not necessarily older than chapter xxiv. Both have their roots in the same materials (see supra, pp. 71, 80).

[2] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 99.

As in chapter xxiv, David is complete master of the situation. Despite the collaboration of the Ziphites with Saul, David remains one step ahead of his adversary. David's spies report Saul's movements accurately. When Saul and his army bed down for the night, an air of unguarded calm steals over the camp. Even before the narrator reports that "a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them" (v. 12c), the advantage of David's position is evident. The narrator's explanation is given in the voice of Abishai: "God has given your enemy into your hand this day" (v. 8a).

This motif, which is characteristic of the wilderness narratives,[3] also occurs in verse 23 ("For the Lord gave you into my hand today.") But David regards his opportunity not as an inducement to violence but as a test of his faithfulness to Yahweh. On this basis each individual in the narrative is judged. Abishai is rebuffed, Abner is reproached, and David is praised. First, David takes his companion to task for playing the part of the tempter. Abishai should realize that no one can strike "the Lord's anointed and be guiltless" (v. 9). If David is forbidden to touch his enemy, how much more must Abishai, whom Saul has not wronged, keep his distance. Only Yahweh can recompense Saul.[4]

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[3] See supra, p. 69.

David reserves his most stinging rebuke for Abner. "As the Lord lives, you deserve to die" (literally, "You are a son of death"), says David (v. 16). "Why have you not kept watch over your lord the king?" (v. 15). Abner and his troops show by their lack of diligence that they do not fully understand the uniqueness of the royal office. Or else they attach little significance to the consecration of Saul. Otherwise, how could they fall asleep at the watch, leaving "the Lord's anointed" exposed to the dangers of the night? Such carelessness, shouts David: "You deserve to die." The "you" is plural, including Saul's men as well as his general. The sin of neglect is no less abhorrent than the sin of overt desecration.

David now turns to Saul, appealing to him on the basis of religious beliefs they have in common. If Yahweh has incited Saul against David, "may he accept an offering" (v. 19b). But if men have poisoned Saul's mind, "may they be cursed before the Lord" (v. 19c). Both remedies are probably to be found in the rituals of the cult.[5] David's real agony is that the exile brought on by Saul's pursuit has driven him both from the expedients of the cult and also from Yahweh's presence. Saul and his confederates might as well say to David, "Go, serve other gods" (v. 19d). Should David perish on foreign soil, the cry of his unrequited blood may not be heard by the Lord.[6]

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[4] V. 10, "Surely the Lord will smite him . . . or else he will go down in battle," anticipates the manner of Saul's death (cf. I. xxxi 1-6).

[5] Cf. Sheldon H. Blank, "Curse, Blasphemy, Spell and Oath," HUCA, XXIII: Part 1 (1950-51), 73-95. "The phrase

The narrative ends on a surprisingly positive note, which leads Nübel to suppose that in the earliest tradition Saul and David achieved a lasting accord in the wilderness of Ziph,[7] a reconciliation which endured till the end of Saul's life. But this theory involves a radical rearrangement and reconstruction of I Samuel xxvii-xxxi.[8] Moreover, David does not return to Gibeah, though invited by Saul (v. 21), and does not fight in Israel's ranks while Saul is king (xxviii-xxxi). Hence, the harmonious atmosphere of xxvi 21-25 is better understood in light of the writer's interest in seeing the two rivals part on friendly terms.[9]

לפני יהוה may have referred to the invoking of curses in a sanctuary as a part of a cult or juridical ceremony," says Blank (p. 78, n. 21). Cf. also I Kings viii 31.

[6] Does this suggest that the religion of David's time was henotheistic? Cf. Caird's arguments against this interpretation of xxvi 19-20 (IB, p. 1020.) Cf. Gen. iv 10.

[7] Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, p. 44.

[8] Ibid, pp. 40-44.

[9] See infra, p. 210.

Although their truce does not last, David and Saul meet and go their separate ways without rancor. The hint of bitterness that crept into David's remarks at xxiv 13, 15-16 is completely missing here. Instead, Saul agrees to call off the chase, and David asks Yahweh to reward him for his "righteousness and faithfulness" (v. 23).

THE VASSAL PRINCE (xxvii 1-II. i 27)

Within the framework of seven pericopes (xxvii 1-II. i 27), five of which are set at Ziklag, six of which take place within the span of eight or nine days,[1] the writer continues to develop his major themes. Although David is vassal and ally of the Philistine king of Gath, he does not shed Israelite blood (xxvii) or take part in the battle against Saul (xxviii 1-2; xxix). Guided by the oracle, David is instead pursuing the Amalekites at the time of the Israelite defeat (xxx). As for Saul, he must fight the Philistines without the assistance of the holy oracle (xxviii 3-25). But he is still the Lord's anointed, a man whose person must not be violated either by his own armor bearer (xxxi) or by an Amalekite messenger (II. i 1-16). To Saul belongs the utmost respect and admiration of all Israelites, an attitude to which David gives voice in both the prose and the poetry of the final chapter of this section (II i).

One pericope, xxviii 3-25, is dislocated in the Masoretic text and probably followed chapter xxx in the original version of "The Vassal Prince."[2] In its present position this pericope disturbs the natural sequence of xxvii 1-12; xxviii 1-2, and xxix 1-11, and presents a confusing picture of the troop movements prior to the battle on Mount Gilboa. If xxviii 3-25 is transposed after chapter xxx, however, the result is a logical military progression: the Philistine mobilization at Aphek (xxix 1); the march to Jezreel (xxix 11); and the bivouac at Shunem (xxviii 3). Then, too, the events of chapters xxviii and xxxi are closely related. The dire predictions of Samuel at xxviii 19b are fulfilled only at xxxi 2, where Saul and three of his sons are slain (II. i 1-16 mentions the death of Saul and one of his sons, i.e., Jonathan.). Finally, the juxtaposition of chapter xxx and xxviii 3-25 provides an interesting thematic contrast, as hinted above. In chapter xxx David overtakes the Amalekites with the aid of the oracle. But the failure of Saul's oracle in the following episode (xxviii 3-25) drives the king to the medium of Endor in despair.

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[1] This figure is arrived at on the basis of the references at xxix 11; xxx 1; xxviii 19^b, 25; xxxi 1, and II. i 2. Note Hertzberg's translation of xxxi 1: "Meanwhile the Philistines fought against Israel . . ." (Samuel, ad loc.)

Underneath the grand theological design of "the Vassal Prince," however, lies a lighter and more provincial vein, which may indicate the provenance of many of these traditions. With what amusement the early folk narrator must have told how David fooled Achish, his Philistine overlord (xxvii, xxix). Especially would the inhabitants of the Negebs of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites (xxvii 10) have delighted in the fictions of David. Better than anyone else they knew that David had conducted no raids in their districts. Likewise, the same groups must have recounted with great pride the story of David's pursuit of the Amalekites (xxx). Had not David divided up the spoil among the towns and villages of Judah (xxx 26-31)? Even on the unhappy occasion of Saul's funeral, David singles the Judeans out from the rest of their Israelite brethren: "And he said it [the lament] should be taught to the people of Judah" (II. i 18). Incidents such as these, all of which describe the closeness of David to the Judean tribes around Ziklag, manifest an unmistakable propinquity. In all likelihood, they formed a complex of oral traditions on which the author drew for his own narrative. For the purposes of the present study, this "source" will be referred to as the "Ziklag complex." It includes xxvii 1-12; xxviii 1-2; xxix 1-11; xxx 1-31, and II. i 1-27.

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[2] This is Budde's argument, which has been adopted by most critics. According to Budde, xxviii 3-25 was omitted by the Deuteronomic compiler, whose moral sensibilities were probably offended by Saul's visit to the necromancer at Endor (KHC, p. 176; cf. Deut. xviii 11). A later scribe restored this pericope to the text but, unfortunately, at the wrong place.

The origins of xxviii 3-25 and xxxi 1-13 are more difficult to determine. Since these traditions are not unsympathetic toward Saul and do not mention David, it nonetheless seems reasonable to suppose that they were at one time part of a complex dealing exclusively with Saul[3] (whether written or oral cannot be determined). However, these narratives also make a vital contribution to "the Story of David's Rise," so much so that it is hard to imagine that story without them. Without chapter xxviii the story of Saul's estrangement from his people, his family, and his God would be incomplete. Without chapter xxxi only the lying report of the Amalekite (II. i 1-16) would relate Saul's death. Besides, David's appeal to the men of Jabesh-gilead in II Samuel ii 4b-7 presupposes the last three verses of chapter xxxi. In any event, all the narratives dealing with the circumstances of Saul's death are extremely useful to our author—for reasons which will soon become apparent.

David Deceives Achish (xxvii 1-12)

Following his two encounters with Saul in chapters xxiv and xxvi, David decides to leave the wilderness of Judah for the relative security of the coastal plains. "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul," says David; "there is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines" (v. 1). Here Achish, the king of Gath, grants asylum to the Hebrews. In return David and his soldiers are to serve under Achish, to raid and loot the neighboring tribes, and, if need be, to support the Philistine coalition in any major war effort. Thus David and his men, their wives and families take up residence with their former enemies in the city of Gath.

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[3] Contrast Hertzberg (Samuel, p. 217) who thinks that xxviii 3-25 is an independent unit of tradition, which was inserted into the book of Samuel by the final redactor.

Not long after the Hebrews had settled in Gath, David approaches his lord with a new proposal. "If I have found favor in your eyes," offers David, "let a place be given me in one of your country towns" (v. 5a).[1] David implies that he does not think himself worthy to "dwell in the royal city with you" (v. 5b); he would prefer a more humble place in Achish's kingdom. Achish, of course, swallows the bait and permits David to move his entire company to Ziklag,[2] which was probably located some fifteen-twenty miles southeast of Gath.[3] Thus removed from the close surveillance of his master, David uses his fief as a base for attacking the enemies of the Judean tribes. He sends out raiding parties against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, leaving no survivors to betray his secret to the Philistines. All the while Achish thinks that David has been wreaking havoc among his own kinsmen: the Judeans, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites. "He has made himself utterly abhorred by his people Israel," chortles Achish; "therefore he shall be my servant always." (v. 12).

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[1] According to Pfeiffer, David would first have been required to prove his loyalty (vv. 8-12) before he received Ziklag from the Philistines (vv. 5-7). Thus Pfeiffer transposes verses 5-7 after verses 8-12 (Introduction, p. 349). However, the unsuspecting Achish neither requests nor receives any real evidence of David's trustworthiness. Instead, the king takes David's word on the matter and is consistently duped by the Israelite. It is, therefore, unnecessary to reverse the traditional order of the text. (Cf. Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 214).

[2] Verse 6b, "Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day," was added to the narrative sometime after the northern tribes had broken away from the kingdom established by David. The exact date of the addition is impossible to determine. Cf. B. S. Childs, "A Study of the Formula, 'Unto this day'," JBL LXXXII (1963), 279-292.

The picture of David in this tradition is clearly that of the folk hero, not that of the overscrupulous orator of chapters xxiv-xxvi. In chapter xxvii David's actions are justified solely on political grounds. He flees Israel to save his own neck. He leads his band against the traditional foes of his people. At the same time his dealings with the Philistines are devious from the outset. He makes Achish look naïve and ridiculous—the stereotype of the gullible villain. Indeed, David cuts so impressive a figure that no Philistine can see through his lies or resist his arguments. Only an extraordinary man, a great national hero, can inspire such confidence in the mind of Israel's enemy.

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[3] Ziklag has usually been identified with Tell el-Khuweilfeh (ca. twelve mi. north of Beersheba); Gath is apparently located on the inner edge of the coastal plain of Philistia either at Tell es-Safi (ca. twelve mi. east of Ashdod) or at Tell Sheikh Ahmed el-Areini (ca. fifteen mi. east of Ashkelon). Hence, Gath is situated fifteen-twenty mi. northeast of Tell el-Khuweilfeh. On Ziklag see Emil Kraeling, Rand McNally Bible Atlas (New York: Rand McNally, 1956), p. 188. On Gath see W. F. Stinespring, "Gath," IDB, II, p. 356.

Yet chapter xxvii in its present context is more than a glorification of a popular hero. Here David acts in accord with the principles set forth by Abigail at xxv 31: "Then there shall be for you no cause of stumbling or remorse, for having shed blood without cause . . ." David may, therefore, put the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites to the ban. He may also deceive and betray the Philistines to his heart's content. The one thing he cannot do is to come to the throne of Israel with Israelite blood on his hands.

David Dismissed from the Philistine Army (xxviii 1-2; xxix 1-11)[1]

The political advantages of the fiefdom at Ziklag, so amusingly apparent in chapter xxvii, suddenly vanish in xxviii 1-2. The Philistines, now David's comrades-in-arms, have decided to go to war with Saul. Naturally David is expected to join the ranks of Achish, an expectation communicated to David by his liege lord himself. "Very well," agrees David, "you shall know what your servant can do" (xxviii 2). So, despite the eloquent preachments of chapters xxiv-xxvi, it now looks as if David is going to become a part of an army that not only defeats the forces of Saul but brings about the death of Saul and his sons. David, so it seems, is once again on the verge of betraying his destiny.

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[1] The reasons for moving xxviii 3-25 from its present position to the end of chapter xxx are discussed on p. 101. See Bernhard Stade's objections in his review of Budde's "The Sacred Books of the Old Testament," Theologische Literaturzeitung XXI: (1896), p. 7.

Fortunately, Achish and David reckon without the suspicions of the war lords of the Philistines. Both the civil and military authorities,[2] "the lords" and "the commanders" (vv. 4, 6) bridle at the idea of including the Hebrews in their army. To them David is a likely traitor: "For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord [Saul]: Would it not be with the heads of the men here?" (v. 4). Already cognizant of David's identity, of his break with Saul as well as of his new relationship with Achish, the Philistine officials are not impressed by Achish's confidence in David. Angrily, they command the ruler of Gath to send David back to Ziklag.

To the writer, the incident provides fresh proof of David's innocence. Indeed, the extravagant and unfounded praise heaped upon David by Achish lends itself easily to just such an interpretation. On one level, of course, such compliments as "I have found no evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day" (v. 6) merely illustrate David's success in fooling Achish. On another level, however, one may hear in Achish's words an echo of Abigail's sentiments (xxv 28): "and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live." In both situations David avoids the shedding of Israelite blood. He is, as Achish says, "blameless . . . as an angel of God" (v. 9). What this means to Achish and what it means to the writer are, to be sure, two different things.

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[2] "The שׂרים I take to be military commanders in distinction from the סרנים, or civil rulers," conjectures Smith (*ICC*, p. 244). Eissfeldt, on the other hand, maintains that the two terms result from the interweaving of two separate literary documents, "L" and "J" (*Komposition*, p. 20).

The First Oracle at Ziklag: "Pursue, Overtake, Rescue." (xxx 1-31)

Three days after the Hebrews are dismissed from the Philistine army, they arrive in Ziklag—only to find their city pillaged and burned, their wives and children carried off by the Amalekites. Overcome with despair, the entire company weeps "until they have no more strength to weep" (v. 4). But from despair the mood of David's men changes to resentment. "Why did not David leave some of us behind to garrison the city? Why did he leave our families and our fortunes completely to the mercy of the Amalekites?" they must have demanded. When David hears the murmuring of his soldiers, he is "greatly distressed"

(v. 6a). Not only are they embittered toward their leader; some of them threaten to kill him.

Once again the oracle saves the day.[1] "Bring me the ephod," says David to Abiathar (v. 7). With this the attention of the people shifts immediately from the despair and hostility of the moment to the possibility of positive, remedial action. From the victory at Keilah (xxiii 1-5) and from their strategic withdrawal from that town (xxiii 6-13), David's soldiers know what valor and discretion the oracle can inspire. From years of close association with David, they know that the oracle is a source of strength and a medium of divine revelation. Hence, to David's men, the words, "Bring me the ephod," call to mind not only their leader's authority but also the battles which they have fought and won at his side. In fact, David's call for the ephod becomes in this situation a symbol of their common cause and an impetus to action.

"Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" David inquires of the Lord (v. 8a). The Lord's reply comes in three parts: (1) "Pursue," (2) "for you shall surely overtake," and (3) "you shall surely rescue" (v. 8b).

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[1] Commenting on verse 6b, "But David strengthened his hand in the Lord his God," Hertzberg observes: "This phrase does not mean that his trust is merely in an inquiry of the holy oracle" (Samuel, p. 227). The point is rather that the Lord gives both courage and direction through the oracle (see above).

Likewise, the subsequent narrative may be divided into sections corresponding to the Lord's commands:[2] verses 9-10, pursuing the Amalekites; verses 11-16, overtaking them; verses 17-31, rescuing the families and distributing the booty. Thus, in addition to making it possible for David to bring a potential mutiny under control, the oracle also provides the structure for the heart of this chapter.

The success of the Amalekite raids actually increases David's chances of overtaking the enemy. The marauders are doubtless encumbered by the quantity of their loot, not to mention the women and children captured at Ziklag. Moreover, David has reason to hope that the ease with which these particular forays were executed may have lulled the Amalekites into a false sense of security. Nonetheless, the raiders enjoy the advantages of a head start and a thorough familiarity with the terrain. As David well knows, in country such as this the Bedouin often vanish as swiftly as they emerge. Thus David can brook no delay. When some of the men show signs of fatigue, they are left behind at the Brook Besor. The rest pause only long enough to dump their baggage with the stragglers (v. 24). But David—as the oracle has commanded—goes on with the pursuit (v. 10a).

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[2] Nübel also makes this point but fails to develop it adequately (Davids Aufstieg, p. 59).

In addition to speed, the success of David's mission also requires luck—some clue as to the exact route the enemy is following. This David finds—and more—in the prostrate form of a man who was formerly a member of the Amalekite raiding party. He is an Egyptian; he is sick; for three days and nights he has been without food or water. For all these reasons he is glad to betray the whereabouts of the men who have left him to die in an isolated wasteland. His spirits revived by food and drink, he makes only one condition: "Swear to me by God, that you will not kill me, or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this band" (v. 15). The condition is accepted and already the promise given in verse 8, "You shall surely overtake," is in part fulfilled.

The Amalekites are an easy prey for David. Eating, drinking, and dancing, at the time of the attack they are celebrating their victories with such abandon that no precautions have been taken. Only four hundred Amalekites, those "who mount camels" (v. 17), escape David's revenge. As usual, no prisoners are taken (v. 17; xxvii 9, 11). Other details of the battle itself do not interest the narrator. The real interest lies rather in the size of the loot and in the completeness of David's victory. The booty includes "the great spoil" of v. 16, the flocks and herds of verse 20, and, of course, David's two wives[3] and all the sons and daughters of verses 18b-19. In fact, "nothing was missing" (v. 19); David rescued all that the Amalekites had carried away" (v. 18a). Hence, all that was promised by the words, "And you shall surely rescue" (v. 8), has now come to pass.

The sudden wealth acquired from the vanquished Bedouin creates new problems for David and his men. Some of the victorious Israelites are unwilling to divide the fruits of victory with those who stayed behind. "We will not give them any of the spoil which we have recovered," they say (v. 22b). Their expression, "_we_ have recovered," of course, makes it apparent that these "wicked and base fellows" (v. 22a) have understood nothing of what has been said in the previous account of the Amalekite defeat (vv. 7-21). The hiphil of נצל (here, "we have recovered") is also found at verse 8 and 18, where its context is entirely different. David's soldiers use the verb to claim credit for the victory, but in verse 18 וַיַּצֵּל points back to the promise of God's grace as revealed by the oracle in verse 8 ("You shall surely rescue," הַצֵּל תַּצִּיל). Two more divergent interpretations of the Hebrew victory could hardly be imagined.

David's moralizing rebuke to his grumbling soldiers is reminiscent of the solemn exhortations of chapters xxiv and xxvi. "You shall not do so with what the Lord has given you," says David; "he has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came up against us" (v. 23). Then follows the formulation of a regulation in rhythm:

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[3] The reference to David's wives is probably secondary. See _infra_, p. 114.

> For as his share is who goes down to the battle,
> So shall his share be who stays by the baggage.

This couplet is the core of the episode relating the dispute of the 400 and the 200 (vv. 21-25)—a tradition which may originally have come into existence independent of the story of the Amalekite defeat (xxx 1-20, 26-31).[4] But to the author, in any event, the tradition preserved in verses 21-25 is more than an interesting digression or legal etiology.[5] In these verses speaks once more the hero of faith, the David who is profoundly aware of the theological import of this history.

Chapter xxx is important to the author not only because of its emphasis on David's piety but also because this narrative is the turning point of "the Story of David's Rise." In this chapter the threads of many traditions are knitted together, some artistically and some artificially. An example of the latter is the reference to David's wives in verses 5 and 18b—possibly the work of some harmonizing scribe at a later time (compare xxv 42-44 and xxvii 3b).[6] However, the clumsiness of these references is not typical of chapter xxx. Verse 1, for example, connects chapter xxx to chapter xxix: "Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day . . ." The reason for David's absence from Ziklag (the march to Aphek with the Philistines) is provided only by chapter xxix.[7] David's request to Abiathar (v. 6) also presupposes some knowledge of the priest's identity, as would be related in xxii 19-23 or xxiii 6-13 (his escape from Nob, the oracle at Keilah). Moreover, the connection of verses 9-10 (the separation of the two hundred from the four hundred) with xxv 13 and xxx 24 makes possible a better understanding of this occurrence. The fatigue of the two hundred only partially explains David's decision to leave them behind. The other detail, the fact that these men also guarded the baggage,[8] is indicated at xxv 13 and xxx 25.

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[4] Cf. Nübel (Davids Aufstieg, p. 60), who regards both vv. 9-10b and 21-25 as secondary. He also compares the speech of the man David (vv. 23-24) to that of the youth in xvii 32-37, 43-47. Their common motif is that the Lord wins the victory (cf. also II. v. 24.).

[5] See B. S. Childs, "A Study of the Formula, 'Unto this Day'," JBL, LXXXII, 289.

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[6] This is the view of Smith (ICC, p. 249), Budde (KHC, p. 188), Pfeiffer (Introduction, p. 350), and others.

[7] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 243.

[8] So. Budde, KHC, p. 187.

Finally, the distribution of the spoil among the cities of the Judeans, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites points back to chapter xxvii. There David defends these tribes from their enemies, but here he becomes their friend and benefactor as well. Thus, looking backward, chapter xxx is the conclusion of the adventures begun with the band of guerrillas in chapter xxii. Looking forward, this final incident of chapter xxx (vv. 26-31) is indispensable to an understanding of David's accession to the throne of Judah (II. ii). The cities befriended by David at this time form the nucleus of his southern kingdom. In this connection the mention of Hebron as the last of the cities to benefit from David's generosity is a hint of things to come. All that remains is to relate the story of Saul's downfall.

Saul Visits the Medium of Endor (xxviii 3-25)

As the story opens, the opposing armies are camped a few miles apart, the Philistines at Shunem, the Israelites on the slightly higher ground at the foot of Mount Gilboa. When Saul surveys the forces amassed by the Philistines, he is "afraid" (v. 5a). Small wonder! The tiny state of Israel has been weakened by factional strife and internal dissension. While Saul has been quarreling with David, Samuel, and Jonathan, the Philistines have been mobilizing their strength. The results of this effort Saul now sees before him at

Shunem. No wonder "his heart trembled greatly" (v. 5b).

As usual, Saul "inquired of the Lord." But "the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets" (v. 6). Is the failure of the oracle in some way related to opposition aroused by the massacre of the priests of Nob?[1] This is not said explicitly, but the connection between the silence of Yahweh and what happened at Nob is a logical one. Saul is portrayed as an Israelite who is lacking in respect for Yahweh's priests (xxii 17). Not long after this David is receiving the benefit of the advice which would hitherto have been accessible to Saul. The king who had cut himself off from the ephod bearers and perhaps antagonized the prophets of Israel as well is now the man whom the Lord will not answer. The full import of this divine indifference to the predicament of Saul will soon become clear.

In desperation Saul decides to pay the medium of Endor a visit. Carefully disguising himself, he and two men travel by night to the woman's residence, only to find that their hostess is immediately suspicious, even frightened by their proposal. "You know what Saul has done," she explains, "how he has cut off the mediums and wizards from the land" (v. 9a). As this woman views it, Saul is a man whose devotion and zeal on behalf of orthodox Yahwism give cause for caution. She knows the penalty inflicted by Saul for witchcraft: "Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?" (v. 9b). Saul hastily reassures her that she will come to no harm on account of "this thing," at which point the medium puts the decisive question: "Whom shall I bring up for you?" (v. 11a). Saul's reply introduces the climax: "Bring up Samuel for me" (v. 11b).

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[1] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 143, 163.

Whether the seance now begins with the sudden appearance of Samuel or whether the woman turns to study Saul's face more closely is not certain. The Hebrew text indicates the former, but five Greek manuscripts suggest the latter: "When the woman saw [looked at][2] Saul, she cried out with a loud voice . . ." (v. 12a). One thing is evident: the word "Samuel" is hardly out of Saul's mouth before the medium sees through his disguise. "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul," she exclaims (v. 12b). Perhaps (if the Greek manuscripts are correct) the woman "concludes from the request for so prominent a man as Samuel to be 'brought up' that the person who made the request must likewise be prominent, and now recognizes the king."[3] Another explanation—in keeping with the traditional text—is also possible.[4] As the woman did not anticipate the visit of so implacable a foe to her profession as Saul, still less did she expect the shade of Samuel to respond to her necromantic charms: "When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice" (v. 12a). Her shock at beholding a spirit that answered to the name of the revered prophet of the Lord—whether she was able to identify his shadowy form with certainty or not—would jar her memory and exacerbate the suspicion already in evidence at verse 9. In any case, the association of these two champions of Yahwism in the mind of the medium was so strong that the presence of the one provoked an instantaneous recognition of the other.

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[2] Budde, KHC, p. 181.

[3] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 219.

The fact that Saul asked for Samuel is the important clue, not only to the woman's reaction, but also to our understanding of Saul.[5] In summoning Samuel, a loyal spokesman for the Lord, Saul manifests a definite interest in hearing the truth. Nothing less than a plain statement from the Lord's mouthpiece will do. Hence, even as Saul employs a means antithetical to Yahwism, he clings to the substance of Yahwism. The only verdict that counts for Saul is that of the Lord—regardless of its content.

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[4] See Budde for a discussion of other plausible interpretations of v. 12 (KHC, pp. 180-81).

[5] Despite the legendary features of xxviii 3-25, it provides several valuable insights into the character of Saul. See Budde's incisive remarks on this point (KHC, p. 176).

At this point, Saul calms the frightened woman a second time, urging her to relate what she sees. "I see a god coming up out of the earth," she says; ". . . An old man is coming up; and he is wrapped in a robe" (vv. 13-14). Her description fits one familiar figure: Samuel, of course. Saul bows respectfully (although he at no time is represented as seeing the apparition with his own eyes), but the spirit is indignant and annoyed. "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" he demands of Saul (v. 15a).

Saul's reply is the desperate and pathetic cry of a man aware of an impending, inescapable doom. "I am in great distress," begins Saul; "the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me" (v. 15b). There are no dreams to interpret, no words from the prophets, Saul continues—nothing but an oppressive, forbidding silence. "Tell me what I shall do," pleads Saul (v. 15). The plea of Saul rings in the ears of an audience only too familiar with the unfortunate circumstances of this man's life. Tragically alienated from his people (xiv 45-46), from his servants (xxii 17), from the priests and prophets of the land—even from his own family (xx 30-34 and xxii 8)—is Saul now totally and inexplicably[6] alienated from the Lord whom he has tried so vainly to serve? Has the God who chose Saul to deliver Israel from her enemies now, as Saul puts it, "turned away from me?" (v. 15). If so, will the Lord leave his people at the mercy of the Philistines?

Saul's premonitions are confirmed and aggravated by the spirit's reply. According to Samuel, the alienation that the king fears more than anything else is now complete: "The Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy" (v. 16). To this Samuel adds—in the original text continuing at verse 19b[7]—what Saul cannot bring himself to accept: the lack of dreams, the eerie silence of oracles and prophets mean that Saul and his army will go into battle without the Lord's help. "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me," says Samuel; "the Lord will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines" (v. 19b).

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[6] Saul's plight may be partially explained as a consequence of the massacre of the priests of Nob, as noted above (pp. 54 and 59). But this is a supposition, not a certainty. Cf. Gressmann, who holds that "the early narrator felt no need to account for Saul's downfall on any grounds other than the inexplicable wrath of the diety . . ." (SAT, II:1, p. 114).

[7] Verses 17-19a are generally regarded as an interpolation which arose after I Samuel xv was added to the books of Samuel. Cf. Budde, KHC, p. 182; Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 112; and Caird, IB, p. 1029. Cf. also Stade's criticisms of this view in Theologische Literaturzeitung, XXI:1, p. 7.

In the later tradition, however, the historian seeks a different explanation for Saul's unhappy situation. This we find in the words inserted into the mouth of Samuel in verses 17-19a. In language and dogma remarkably similar to that of I Samuel xv 19 and 28, the prophet justifies Saul's rejection: "Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day" (v. 18). Here Saul's downfall is understood as a punishment for his failure to carry out the ban against the Amalekites. In Chronicles, however, it is Saul's visit to the necromancer that offends the writer: "So Saul died for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance, and did not seek guidance from the Lord" (I Chron. x 13). This interpretation not only departs from that of the early tradition; it also ignores the fact that Saul did seek counsel from the Lord—even though he sought it through the medium. But both the Chronicler and the glossator of verses 17-19a see Saul's rejection in terms of a later morality, one which is foreign to the narrative at hand. To the later historians, Saul's visit to the medium of Endor is one more proof of his villainy.

To the original writer, on the other hand, xxviii 3-25 is the final step in the political and psychological deterioration of Saul. Following the terrible predictions of Samuel, Saul was "filled with fear because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night" (v. 20). This man, who for all his failings, is still an awesome figure on the pages of Israel's history,[8] "falls full length upon the ground" (v. 20a). This is no villain but a human being, broken in body and spirit, the pale and tormented shadow of his former self. To the woman, the man lying on the ground before her is simply a fellow creature, acutely in need of food and sympathy. She pleads with Saul to take some nourishment, if only a "morsel of bread" (v. 22). When Saul finally agrees to accept her hospitality, she prepares an excellent meal of veal and freshly-baked bread. It is, nonetheless, evident that the one who receives this eloquent expression of kindness leaves the house of his hostess a dejected and defeated man.

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[8] Gressmann argues that the demise of Saul does not reach tragic proportions, because the reader does not find in Saul "any titantic defiance, which would draw our hearts to him" (SAT, II:1, p. 115). If the characterization of Saul be compared to that of Lear or Macbeth, this is true. However, the simple fact that Saul demands an answer from Samuel (and from the Lord!), that he refuses to eat anything after Samuel has condemned him, and that he commits suicide rather than allow himself to be captured by the Philistines (xxxi)—these are hardly the acts of a man who resigns himself passively to his fate. Cf. McKane, TBC, p. 174.

The Death of Saul (xxxi 1-13)

The Philistine attack on the army of Israel turns into a rout; "the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa" (v. 1b). Only one small pocket of resistance, soldiers gathered around Saul, refuses to budge. Soon, however, the enemy archers find the range, killing Saul's three sons and wounding the king himself. For Saul the alternatives are clear: either a quick, honorable death at the hands of his own men or else a slow, agonizing death at the hands of the Philistines. What is worse, Saul realizes that the enemy would take great pleasure in subjecting him to public abuse and derision, as they did to Samson (Judges xvi 25). This Saul dreads much more than torture or death.[1] Hence, he calls his armor-bearer: "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and make sport of me" (v. 4a).

"But his armor-bearer would not" (v. 4b)—despite the fact that he knew full well what would happen to his master if he refused; despite the fact that dealing such a blow, however repulsive to the man personally, could only be regarded as his duty to Saul, perhaps even as his patriotic responsibility. Still he refused. Unlike the armor-bearer who administered the coup de grâce to Abimelech,

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[1] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 253.

King of Shechem (Judges ix 54), "he feared greatly" (v. 4c). Unlike the Amalekite in the following episode (II. i 1-16), Saul's armor-bearer would not lay a hand on his lord. Better to disobey the king's command, better to allow the Philistines to torture and mock Saul before he died, better even to force the king to take his own life than to violate the Lord's anointed.[2] To be sure, the present text contains no reference to Saul's inviolability; the following narrative, on the other hand, shows that this is precisely what the writer has in mind.

"Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it" (v. 4d). In this way Samuel's prophecy—in all its gruesome details—comes to pass (xxviii 19b). Saul and his sons, Jonathan, Abinadad, and Malchishua, are dead. In addition, "all Saul's men" (his bodyguard,[3] v. 6) and the army of Israel are decimated by the Philistines. When the Israelites inhabiting the northern side of the plain of Jezreel see what is happening, they are forced to flee, leaving their cities to the Philistines. At least some of the towns across the Jordan are also evacuated at this time—if the Hebrew text of Samuel is reliable.[4] Up and down the land (v. 9) the Philistines gloat over their victory and Saul's downfall. His head and armor are proudly displayed in the presence of the Philistine idols and before the people. Saul's armor is then deposited in the temple of the war goddess, Ashtoreth;[5] his torso the Philistines hang on the wall of Beth-shan (a garrison in the plain of Jezreel) to taunt the beaten Israelites. Thus this is a day of unprecedented disaster for the people of the Lord. It would seem that the tiny state of Israel has been dealt a defeat from which it cannot possibly recover.

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[2] Cf. Gressmann, SAT II:1, p. 116 and Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 232.

[3] Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 229. LXX omits "and all his men." Chronicles substitutes "and all his house" (I Chron. x 6).

As the dreadful prophecies of chapter xxviii are followed by an expression of sympathy for Saul (vv. 20-25), so the horrors of the present narrative also conclude with a gesture of friendship and esteem for the dead king.[6] Remembering Saul's timely rescue of their city from the

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[4] For a defense of the Masoretic text of verse 7, see de Vaux, LStB, p. 145 and Martin Noth, The History of Israel (2d ed. rev.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 177. (Hereafter referred to as Noth, History of Israel.) "The usual alteration of the text in this passage is not justified on textual or material grounds," writes Noth; "there were no Israelites in the 'cities of the plain' and there were no 'cities of the Jordan' at all" (p. 177, n. 3).

[5] MT: Ashtaroth, a deliberate misvocalization of the singular form (Ashtoreth or Ashtart); so J. Gray, "Ashtaroth," IDB, I, 255.

[6] Contrast the attitude of the Chronicler (I. x 13-14).

Ammonites (I. xi), the men of Jabesh-gilead go to Beth-shan to recover Saul's body from the Philistines. Operating under cover of night, they catch the enemy garrison napping and apparently steal the bodies without a fight—a manuever of exceptional skill and bravery, a fitting tribute to the tactics of Saul and Jonathan (I. xiv 1-15), and an effective reminder to the Philistines that the spirit of these dead heroes is very much alive in their followers. But the bold deed of the men of Jabesh has religious as well as political significance. Following their return, they burn the bodies of Saul and his sons (why we do not know);[7] their bones are then interred under the sacred tamarisk tree in Jabesh. Only after the burial, according to the popular notions of the time, does it become possible for the shades of the vanquished to rest.[8]

An Amalekite Commits Sacrilege (II. i 1-16)

Following the victory over the Amalekites, David and his soldiers return to Ziklag. Three days later a strange sight greets their eyes, a messenger whose bedraggled appearance shows at once that his is no ordinary visit. His clothes are in rags; dust and grime are on his face. With the boldness of a man bearing important news, he hastens to

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[7] See McKane, TBC, pp. 173-74.

[8] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 117.

David, prostrating himself at his feet. "I have escaped from the camp of Israel . . . ," says he; "the people have fled from the battle, and many of the people also have fallen and are dead; and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead" (vv. 3-4). But David wants to hear more, especially about Saul and Jonathan, before he accepts the man's story at face value. "How do you know," inquires David, "that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" (v. 5).

The refugee's story is as vivid an account of Saul's death as that related in I Samuel xxxi, but the details of the accounts differ markedly. According to the stranger, Saul sees him, beckons him to draw near, then pleads with him to strike the coup de grâce. According to the previous narrative, the king tries to persuade his armor-bearer to end his misery, then commits suicide. But the Amalekite delivers the fatal blow in II Samuel i 1-10. Classical documentary analysis has ordinarily explained these discrepancies by attributing I Samuel xxxi to one source and the Amalekite report to another.[1]

In recent years, however, many critics have rejected this older view in favor of the hypothesis that both narratives belong to the same writing.[2] The literary connections between I Samuel xxxi and II Samuel ii 4b-7, on the one hand, and between II Samuel i 1-16 and iv 10-11, on the other hand, support the newer position; for both II Samuel ii 4b-7 (David's appeal to Jabesh-gilead) and iv 10-11 (an allusion to the execution of the Amalekite) are definitely a part of the original "David's Rise."[3] How then do we explain the inconsistencies between the two reports of Saul's death? Caird holds that the earlier narrative gives a factual account, whereas the Amalekite tale is a fictitious version of the same event.[4] "The author of the early source does not consider it necessary to give the unvarnished truth when writing in character,"[5] argues Caird. The writer who set I Samuel xxxi 1-13 and II Samuel i 1-10 side by side "expected his readers to realize that men do not always give a precise and unimpassioned account of events in which they took part, and that they may have good reasons for suppressing or modifying the facts."[6] Thus the messenger of II Samuel i 1-16 did not take Saul's life but was in the vicinity of the battle and concocted a story to suit his

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[1] Cf. Budde, KHC (ad loc); Nowack, HKAT, pp. 149-150; Smith, ICC, p. 254.

[2] Cf. Eissfeldt, Komposition, p. 24; Caird, IB, pp. 1041-42; Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, p. 65. Cf. also

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Eric C. Rust, The Book of Judges; the Book of Ruth; the First and Second Books of Samuel, Vol. VI of The Layman's Bible Commentary, ed. B. H. Kelly et al. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), p. 122.

[3] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 1041.

[4] Ibid, p. 1042

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

own purposes.

As the Amalekite tells it, Saul was "leaning on his spear" (v. 6) when he first spotted the speaker. "Stand beside me and slay me," cries the king; "for anguish has seized me" (v. 9ab). But the problem is what is meant by "anguish"[7] and the uncertain statement that follows (v. 9c). Does the Amalekite represent Saul as saying that he is too exhausted from the heat of the battle to kill himself? This is a possible interpretation of verse 9c.[8] (Cf. de Vaux's translation: "Dizziness has seized me, though my life is completely in me.")[9] Or does Saul mean that he is near the point of death owing to wounds inflicted by the Philistines and perhaps by his own hand?[10] If so, at least this part of the Amalekite's story is conformable to the previous narrative. The translation of the Revised Standard Version comports well with this interpretation: "Yet my life still lingers." Of course, the point is that the Amalekite is lying. Hence, his report need not agree with that of I Samuel xxxi in every detail.[11]

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[7] הַשָּׁבָט occurs only once in the OT. Apparently, the root denotes "bodily weakness" or "giddiness" or "the cramp." Cf. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, Vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951), p. 944. Hereafter referred to as Koehler and Baumgartner, Lexicon. Cf. also Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 232.

[8] Cf. Smith, ICC, pp. 253-55; Caird, IB, p. 1043.

[9] de Vaux, LStB, p. 148.

[10] That Saul was leaning on his spear may mean that he was trying to commit suicide (a suggestion of Dr. J. P. Hyatt).

After relating the circumstances that led him to dispatch Saul, the Amalekite produces incontrovertible evidence of the king's death: "I took the crown which was on his head and the armlet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord" (v. 10b). This is a flourish worthy of the best Hebrew histrionics. As did David when confronting Abner and Saul with the spear taken from the king's side (xxvi 16, 22), the Amalekite delays the presentation of his proofs until the last, dramatic moment. With the crown of Saul in plain view, the citizens of Ziklag can no longer doubt that the king is dead.

Seeing the effects of Saul in the hands of the Amalekite, David is overcome with grief. He and his men tear their garments in dismay and rend the air with sobs. But to the Amalekite a quite different mood is suggested by the transfer of these symbols of authority[12] into David's hands. This act may represent the messenger's belief that he is standing in the presence of Saul's successor. As David observes in II Samuel iv 10, this man "thought he was bringing good news." Naturally, he expects a reward for his services. To David, however, this gift betokens not loyalty but betrayal.[13]

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[11] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 1043.

[12] Cf. Gressmann (SAT, II:1, p. 119) on the significance of the royal insignia.

The question concerning the messenger's identity at verse 13 is more than a resumption of the dialogue of verses 1-10 and, therefore, merely a pretext for introducing the grim scene of verses 13-16. To be sure, David already knows that the man is an Amalekite, but here our hero asks for and receives new information. "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite," replies the alleged executioner of Saul (v. 13b). As a sojourner (a non-Hebrew living in the domain of Israel), he was expected to show respect for Israelite customs and beliefs.[14] "How is it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" demands David (v. 14). One who has dwelt within the bounds of Israelite law ought to govern his actions accordingly. "Your blood be on your head," says David; "for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have slain the Lord's anointed'" (v. 16).

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[13] Morgenstern believes that the story told by the Amalekite "was indeed welcome news to David," who slew the messenger in order to establish himself as Saul's goel (JBL, LXXVIII:4, 325). Thus Morgenstern views vv. 12-16 as an authentic tradition. Walter Harrelson, on the other hand, suggests that II. i 1-16 "probably has arisen in response to the need to portray David as the avenger of Saul." Cf. Walter Harrelson, Interpreting the Old Testament (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), p. 170. "Yet one may suspect," ventures Harrelson, "that this is a Judean story designed to enhance the stature of David" (p. 170).

[14] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, pp. 119-121.

The issue here is not the veracity of the Amalekite's tale; we do not know whether David believed him or not. The main concern of verses 13-16 is ideological.[15] To David, (as depicted by the writer of "David's Rise," who probably added this tradition) the idea mouthed by the Amalekite is as offensive as the wrong he claims to have committed. Concludes David in effect: even to contemplate the murder of the Lord's anointed is a crime punishable by death.

David's Lament (II. i 17-27)

The lament introduced in verses 17-18 is the finest tribute to Saul and Jonathan in the Old Testament. In fact, the praise of Saul is so unreserved in this text that at least one attempt at sabotage must be observed. In the Masoretic text of verse 21 the word, משׁח , has been pointed incorrectly, so as to modify "Saul" instead of "shield";[1] hence, the Latin translation, *quasi non unctus*,[2] on which the King James' rendering is based: "as though he had not been anointed with oil." Moreover, it is possible that the word, בְּלִי ("not"), was inserted into the original text in order to deny that Saul had ever been anointed by the Lord.[3] Of course, nothing could be more foreign to the views of chapters xxiv, xxvi, and II. i 13-16, which picture David as repeatedly acknowledging Saul as "the Lord's anointed." This concept—one of our author's favorites—is missing in the present passage (vv. 17-27). The language and spirit of the dirge are more patriotic and personal than theological.[4] Hence, the historian apparently permits David to speak for himself at this point. But whether David wrote these words or not, the important thing is that an expression of such genuine respect for Saul and Jonathan, a lament of such tenderness and pathos, should have been attributed to David. From the standpoint of the author of "the Story of David's Rise," this passage is an authentic representation of David's attitude toward the king and his son.

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[15] Cf. McKane, *TBC*, p. 181.

[1] 21 MSS of MT read *mashuah*.

[2] See Smith, *ICC*, p. 262.

Verse 18, "And David said to teach the sons of Judah the bow; behold it was written in the Book of Jashar" (a literal translation of the Hebrew), is so problematic that any reconstruction must be tentative. If we assume, however, that וַיֹּאמֶר ("and he said") belongs at the beginning of the verse,[5] the idea conveyed by the traditional translations would be correct: "And he bade them teach the children of Judah the bow" (King James). Thus Eissfeldt argues that David intends the lament as an admonition to future Judean soldiers to become as proficient in the use of the bow as were the Philistines who felled Saul and Jonathan.[6] Except for one word, קֶשֶׁת ("bow"), which should be omitted with the Septuagint,[7] there is nothing to commend this view. A more likely explanation is that David desires that his response to the news of Saul's death be made public: "And he said it should be taught to the people of Judah" (Revised Standard Version). As in the case of Abner's murder, David wants it understood that he respected and honored his former adversary. Moreover, the fact that this lament was written in the Book of Jashar (the "Book of the Upright") may bear out this interpretation. The Book of Jashar was a poetic source (Joshua x 18; I Kings viii 53 LXX), some parts of which were concerned with the legitimation of the Davidic dynasty.[8] At least this is the interest of I Kings viii 53 (Hebrew: I Kings viii 13):

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[3] So Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 351.

[4] "It is remarkable that no religious thought of any kind appears in the poem: the feeling expressed by it is purely human" (Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 239).

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[5] Cf. Smith, ICC, p. 260.

[6] Otto Eissfeldt, "Zwei Verkannte Militär-Technische Termini im Alten Testament," VT, V:3 (July, 1955), p. 234. Cf. Hertzberg (Samuel, p. 238), who argues that "the bow" is the title of David's lament.

[7] The Greek text of I Kings viii 53 is introduced by a statement which does not appear in the MT: "Behold, is it not written in the book of the song?" Translating back into Hebrew, Wellhausen rearranges the consonants of the last word in this sentence ("song" = ᾠδῆς); from שִׁיר he gets יָשָׁר which was probably the original reading. See Wellhausen, Komposition, p. 271.

> I have built a royal house for thee,
> An established place for thy throne for ever.[9]

This refers to Solomon and the building of the temple. But in "the Story of David's Rise" the problem is to defend David's accession to the throne of Israel; thus, to demonstrate the continuity between Saul's rule and that of David. What better illustrates the closeness of two kings than this lament, so convincing in its esteem for Saul, so moving in its love for Jonathan!

"Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!" begins the poet (v. 19a). He alludes, of course, to Saul and Jonathan, Israel's pride and joy—now Israel's fallen heroes. Jonathan, like his father, was a mighty man. But Saul was a warrior of such stature that even his detractors inadvertently acclaimed his achievements ("Saul has slain his thousands . . . ,"[10] said the partisans of David). How cruel seems the lot of these men of valor! The triumphant cries of a jubilant enemy must grate on their ears—or so the poet imagines. The very idea repulses him. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon," says David (v. 20a). If the outcome of this disastrous defeat cannot be reversed, at least one can hope that the news will never reach Philistine ears.[11]

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[8] So Gray, I & II Kings, p. 196.

[9] Ibid, Gray's translation.

Now the site of Saul's death is addressed: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you . . ." (v. 21a). Surely the heavens will cease to pour out blessing on a place such as this, thinks the poet. To these heights the Israelites have looked for protection from their enemies on the coastal plain. But Gilboa has played the traitor. Here the shields that were once lifted high by the mighty men, once polished with oil in readiness for battle—now lie abandoned and defiled. "Ye deceitful fields,"[12] cries the poet. Gilboa has become an arena of destruction, an ally of Gath and Ashkelon. "Let there be no dew or rain upon you" is David's curse.

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[10] xviii 7: xxix 5.

[11] Cf. Gressmann, *SAT*, II:1, p. 121.

[12] Read תַּרְמִית instead of תְּרוּמֹת. See Alfons Schulz, *Die Bücher Samuel*, Vol. II: *Das Zweite Buch Samuel*, Vol. VIII of the *Exegetisches Handbuch zum* Alten *Testament*, ed. Johannes Nikel (Münster in Westf: Aschendorf,

Next the poet exults in the prowess of these armaments prior to their defilement on Mount Gilboa (v. 22). In the hands of Saul and Jonathan, the sword and the bow became like ravenous beasts, craving the enemy's fat, thirsting for his blood.[13] "The bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty," says David (v. 22b). In praise of the heroes themselves, no eulogies are too extravagant.

> Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
> In life and death they were not divided (v. 23a).

To be sure, there was tension and disagreement between the two men—a painful estrangement related in chapters xx and xxii (I Samuel), a fact of which all David's hearers are aware. But only a base and vengeful spirit would call this to Saul's account three days after his death.[14] Moreover, David realizes that Saul and Jonathan never allowed their differences to harden into a permanent rift. Had they been lesser men, the story might have been different. But their loyalty to each other, like their love for Israel, was made

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1920), p. 14. The same reading is adopted by Hertzberg, (Samuel, p. 235) and de Vaux (LStB, p. 149). Cf. RSV ("Nor upsurging of the deep"), a conjectural reconstruction based on an Ugartic parallel. Cf. H. L. Ginsberg, "The Ugaritic Texts and Textual Criticism," JBL, LXII (1943), p. 111.

[13] Cf. the quotation from Keil in Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 237.

[14] See McKane, TBC, p. 180.

of finer metal. When their people were threatened by the Philistines, Saul and Jonathan stood side by side. Like the eagle, they swooped down on their prey; like the lion, they overpowered and devoured him. When defeat finally overtook them, they died as they had lived—together.

Now the poet calls the "daughters of Israel" to weep copious tears over the king, whose victories have not only filled the royal chests but enhanced the beauty of the women of the realm. Crimson, jewels, ornaments of gold, the dainty things that women love—prior to the reign of Saul "the daughters of Israel" occasionally saw and rarely possessed such treasures. But Saul brought them back from his forays again and again (xiv 47-48). Indeed, no military or political leader since Joshua had so fired the imagination or increased the ambitions of the Hebrews. Even the Philistines stood in awe of Saul, as was indicated by the size of the campaign mounted against him (xxviii 5, xxix) and their elaborate festivities celebrating his death (xxxi 9-10). Both at home and abroad Saul was recognized as the man who had turned his mountain tribesmen into a political and military force to be reckoned with in the whole of Palestine.

In the final strophe the poet's sentiments become for the first time intensely and manifestly personal. Here David speaks of Jonathan's death not so much with the esteem of a patriot as with the sadness of a friend. Jonathan is simply "my brother" over whose fate "I am oppressed with grief" (v. 26a). Cries David: "Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (v. 26b), a comparison that is both remarkable and unique. "In the entire Old Testament," writes H. U. Nübel, "only our original writing is acquainted with the love of a man for a man."[15] Only in "the Story of David's Rise" does the word, אהבה, describe the relationship of two males; elsewhere in the Bible this word refers to the love between man and God or between a man and a woman.[16] Nowhere is the friendship of David and Jonathan more warmly or convincingly expressed than in this closing passage of David's lament.

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[15] David's Aufstieg, p. 66.

[16] Ibid.

KING OVER JUDAH (II. ii-iv)

The main interest of "King over Judah" (II. ii-iv) is David's relations with Ishbaal during the years immediately following Saul's death. Other political and military developments during this period are either ignored or reported with such brevity that one does not get a complete picture of the two kingdoms at Hebron and Mahanaim. But, despite the lacunae in chronology and basic political information, the traditions of II Samuel ii-iv do present a remarkably accurate account of the events which brought about Ishbaal's ruin. From the moment of David's anointment until Ishbaal's death, each episode fits smoothly and felicitously into the larger context. Only here and there does a minor gloss or editorial addition disturb the harmony of the text.[1] When these verses are removed, it is easy to see that the narrative has been arranged with an eye to suspense. II Samuel ii-iv is the finest piece of history writing in "the Story of David's Rise."

In each episode the action begins, ends, or takes place in its entirety at Hebron, which reveals that these stories originated in or near the site of David's first capital.[2] This story cycle (or "Hebron complex") was probably transmitted by the folk narrators in the region but was also preserved at David's court in Hebron; for these incidents elaborate the same motifs as the earlier materials at I Samuel xxiv-xxvi: David's reverence for Saul and his sons (ii 4b-7; iv 1-12); and the avoidance of bloodguilt (ii 12-32; iii 6-39). (Note also the guidance of the oracle at ii 1-4a.) In fact, the apologetic concerns of the "Hebron complex" are no less important to the writer than its historical merits. These narratives are included in "David's Rise" not only because they set forth a reliable and intriguing account of David's stay at Hebron but also because they tell us why David's accession to Israel's throne is a legitimate one.

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[1] E.g., II. ii 10-11; iii 2-5; iv 2b-4.

The Second Oracle at Ziklag: "Go up to Hebron (II. ii 1-11)

Saul's death creates a power vacuum in Israel into which David and his new rival, Abner (Saul's commander), are both anxious to step. Abner has the advantage of being a close associate of Saul, a relationship out of which he makes political capital with the northern and eastern tribes (vv. 8-9). David, on the other hand, is not even residing in Israelite territory at the time of Saul's death; he is still in Ziklag, serving as a vassal to the Philistines. As the story opens, David consults the oracle: "'Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah?' And the Lord said to him, 'Go up.' David said, 'To which shall I go up?' And he said, 'To Hebron'" (v. 1). Thus is established the basis for David's trek to Hebron, where he is greeted by the Judeans whom he had earlier befriended in chapter xxx 26-31. "And there they anointed David king over the house of Judah" (v. 4a).

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[2] Hertzberg also attributes II Samuel ii-iv to "the larger work describing the 'rise of David'" (Samuel, p. 296). The sources used by the biblical writer are called "good local traditions" by Hertzberg, (pp. 252-53), the hypothesis adopted here.

The details of David's elevation to the kingship are not provided by the writer. Whether David took the initiative in persuading the southern tribes to make him king we do not know. Perhaps the "men of Judah" decided to elect David king after he and his band had already occupied Hebron; we do not know. Nor are we told who anointed David or where he was installed. David could have been anointed by some representative of the tribes, an elder, for example; or he could have been consecrated by a priest (Abiathar) or a prophet (Gad), both of whom play important parts in the David tradition. The ceremony probably took place at the famous sanctuary of Mamre,[1] just outside of Hebron. Still, none of this information—so vital to an understanding of the institution of kingship in Israel—is provided by the passage at hand. All we know is that whatever happened constituted a momentous break with previous Israelite tradition. For the first time in the history of the amphictyonic league, one group of tribes—led by Judah—establishes a ruler whose election is clearly contrary to the wishes of the majority of the clans. The southern tribes (Judah, Caleb, Othniel, Cain, Jerahmeel, and Simeon),[2] here called the "house of Judah," were determined to have David as their king, whether his credentials met with the approval of the tribes in the north or not.

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[1] Noth, History of Israel, p. 181.

According to Alt and Noth, the unilateral action of the southern tribes also signals an abrupt departure from the ideas of kingship held in the north.[3] Before Saul becomes king, he is anointed by a prophet and is seized by the Spirit of the Lord (I. x 1-6), as were the charismatic leaders such as Gideon and Jephthah before the monarchy was established.[4] In the account of David's accession to Judah's throne, on the other hand, Alt notes the absence of any reference to a "previous summons or charismatic endowment of David by the Lord."[5] Concludes Alt: ". . . There is missing here that initiative of Yahweh prior to all human activity which we confront so powerfully as a fundamental ideational factor in the original structure of the kingdom of Israel."[6] This view is shared by Noth: ". . . The election of David appears to have taken place without any religious foundation such as the designation by a prophet. It was a purely political act."[7]

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[2] Ibid, p. 182.

[3] Albrecht Alt, "Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Vol. II (München: C. H. Beck, 1953), 33-43. Hereafter referred to as Alt, K. S. II. Cf. also Noth, History of Israel, p. 183.

[4] Alt, "Das Königtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda," K. S. II, p. 118.

It is doubtful, however, if so abbreviated an account of David's enthronement at Hebron will bear the weight of these views. For reasons known only to himself, the writer presents little more than the fact that after Saul's death David was anointed King over the house of Judah. On this event the developments in the final chapters of "David's Rise" depend (II. ii-iv). Yet David's accession to the throne of Judah is by no means the climax of this narrative. Only when David has become king over all Israel in II Samuel v 1-3 is the Lord's plan complete. For this reason the writer's description of this preliminary sovereignty over part of the tribes would be necessarily briefer[8] than his account of the climactic installation of David over the entire nation (II. v. 1-3).

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[5] Ibid, p. 128.

[6] Alt, "Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina," K. S., II, p. 41.

[7] Noth, History of Israel, p. 183.

Moreover, there is in this pericope another feature the significance of which neither Alt nor Noth has fully appreciated—the holy oracle. The decision of David to leave Ziklag for his homeland is prompted by the oracle. The same is true of his decision to take up residence in the strategic city of Hebron. Apart from these moves, David would not have been present to receive the honor conferred upon him by the southern tribes. Are we to assume then with Alt[9] that the divine guidance so manifest in the departure from Ziklag and the occupation of Hebron is no longer operative in the subsequent happening, i.e., David's election to the kingship?

On the contrary; as we have already seen in chapters xxii, xxiii, xxviii and xxx, the success or failure of the oracle marks the turning points in the careers of David and Saul. Following his flight from Saul's court (xxi 2-11);

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[8] Alt, "Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina," K. S., II, p. 40, n. 1.

[9] Alt admits that the oracle may be intended by the narrator as "a surrogate for the missing spontaneous designation of the first king of Israel by Yahweh" (Ibid, p. 41). Alt does not accept this interpretation, however (p. 41, n. 2).

following the organization of the guerrillas at Adullam (xxii 5); prior to and following the important battle at Keilah (xxiii 1-13); prior to the pursuit and defeat of the Amalekites (xxx)—at each of these junctures David "inquired of the Lord." In each instance the Lord gave direction and encouragement without which David could not have advanced to the present stage of his career. Now that he stands at Hebron, it would be strange, indeed, if our hero had undertaken the next, decisive step solely or primarily on the basis of his own initiative. From the writer's viewpoint, the divine providence that led David to Hebron also made him king. Here as elsewhere, the sign of the Lord's blessing is the oracle.

Once installed as monarch over the house of Judah, David wastes no time in seeking to expand his sphere of influence. He sends a delegation to the citizens of Jabesh-gilead, complimenting them on the kindness they have demonstrated towards Saul: "May you be blessed by the Lord, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord, and buried him!" (v. 5b). This message is representative of David's politics during his rule at Hebron. As he commanded the men of Judah to learn his lament for Saul (II. i 18), so David wants Israelites throughout the land to be aware of his respect for their former sovereign.[10] The place to begin was at Jabesh, a town renowned for its devotion to Saul. What a contrast between their attitude toward "the Lord's anointed" and that of the Amalekite![11]

Of course, there is another reason why David is interested in wooing the men of Jabesh. This town is located across the Jordan in Gilead, one of the regions being cultivated by Ishbaal,[12] Saul's son, in connection with his own political aspirations (v. 9). In the southern part of Gilead, Ishbaal establishes his kingdom at Mahanaim, a town relatively remote both from David and from the Philistines. However, considering the recent Philistine victory and the competition of the tribes under David's jurisdiction, the power of Ishbaal west of the Jordan is probably slight. Only the Benjaminites provide enthusiastic support of Ishbaal, and they seem more responsive to Abner's leadership than to the king's (II. iii 19). So Ishbaal was no more than a figurehead; Abner was the man David had to contend with.[13]

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[10] See _supra_, p. 134.

[11] Cf. McKane, _TBC_, p. 183.

[12] MT: "Ish-bosheth" or "man of shame"—a deliberate distortion of the early text. Cf. Smith, _ICC_, p. 269.

[13] ii 10-11 were probably added by the deuteronomic historian. See Martin Noth, _Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien_, p. 62.

Abner Slays Asahel in the Battle of Gibeon (ii 12-31)

Now that Ishbaal has been made king over the northern tribes, Abner decides to test David's strength. From Mahanaim Abner and his men march to Gibeon, a Benjaminite city not far from Judean territory. There they meet the forces of Joab, the Israelites on one side of the pool of Gibeon and David's servants on the other. "Let the young men arise and play before us," calls Abner across the pool (v. 14a). "Let them arise," consents Joab. Twelve Benjaminites and twelve of David's soldiers draw near, each facing his counterpart from the other camp. For all the reader knows at this point, the opposing youths are about to engage in some kind of tournament—a fencing or a wrestling match. But suddenly in verse 16, each man seizes his partner by the head and plunges his sword into his side. Fierce fighting erupts at once, and Abner's men are forced to flee.

Once again the description lacks detail. How did it happen that all twenty-four men were slain?[1] Why did a bloody battle break out immediately thereafter? One possibility is that the "game" suggested by Abner, which was supposed to be a friendly rivalry, got out of hand.[2] Perhaps one side disregarded the rules of contest, striking lethal blows instead of playful licks, thus provoking the onlookers to join in the fight. This explanation finds support in the unusual language of Abner's invitation: "Let the young men . . . play (וִישַׂחֲקוּ) before us" (v. 14a). If the idea being suggested by Abner is gay or lighthearted activity—the usual sense of שׂחק ("to play")[3]—this reconstruction of the event is probably accurate: what began as play ended in tragedy.

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[1] Only twelve men were killed, if the interpolation proposed by Kittel's Biblia Hebraica is accepted. BH inserts "the men of Benjamin" after "each" (אישׁ) in verse 16: "And each of the men of Benjamin caught his opponent by the head, and thrust his sword in his opponent's side . . ." (v. 16a). "The meaning then is that there was a conspiracy on the part of the men of Benjamin to act treacherously against the twelve of Judah who were done to death," argues McKane (TBC, p. 185). See McKane, ad loc., for a vigorous advocacy of Kittel's text.

The problem is that there is no indication of sport or lighthearted competition here. Nor is there any hint that one side betrayed the other. On the other hand, the fighting seems serious and ruthless from the outset. Perhaps, therefore, the "game" being proposed by Abner is actually a preliminary combat similar to that waged by David and Goliath.[4] The "young men" are professional soldiers,[5] cadets who seek to gain recognition as "mighty men" (גִּבּוֹרִים) and at the same time to strike dread into the hearts of the opposing army. Should the twelve Judeans win, the psychological advantage would lie with David's forces. But should the Benjaminites emerge as victors, David's men would probably turn and run, as did the Philistines when Goliath fell.

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[2] Cf., e.g., Segal, "Studies in the Books of Samuel," JQR, VIII, p. 95. Cf. also Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 252.

[3] שׂחק is "used nowhere else of fighting" (Smith, ICC, p. 271.)

[4] See R. de Vaux's review of Hertzberg's "Die Samuelbücher," RB, LXV:1 (January, 1958), p. 125.

[5] So W. F. Albright, "The Seal of Eliakim and the Latest Preëxilic History of Judah, With Some Observations on Ezekiel," JBL, LI (1932), p. 83.

If this view is correct, "to play" means to "perform a combat"[6] or "engage in a tournament," a meaning fully in accord with the ancient idea of warfare.[7] "With the Israelites, as with the Greeks and the Arabs, as with many peoples in the age of the heroes, war was considered a dangerous and exciting sport," notes de Vaux; "and this analogy authorizes the use of the same verb [שׂחק]."[8] Thus the youths selected by Abner and Joab strive with all their might for a victory decisive enough to put the enemy camp to flight. In this case, however, their efforts go for naught. They themselves are cut down; a furious battle breaks out, and Abner's men are forced to flee. The tournament itself has decided nothing except the name of the site on which the fighting takes place. It was called Helkath-hassiddim[9] which means "field of sides" (designating the way in which the combatants met their deaths). Apparently, this tradition was preserved by those who lived in the vicinity of "the field of sides."

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[6] See Koehler and Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 918. De Vaux translates וִישַׂחֲקוּ, "let them wrestle" (LStB, p. 153).

[7] An orthostat found at Tell Halaf (10th century B.C.) illustrates this type of individual combat. This is reproduced in color by Yigael Yadin's The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archeological Study, Vol. II (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 267.

[8] R. de Vaux, "Les Combats Singuliers dans L'Ancien Testament," Studia Biblica et Orientalia, Vol. I (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1959), p. 370.

The main interest of this pericope lies not, however, in a place name or in an Israelite defeat but rather in the unfortunate incident following the tournament and Joab's subsequent rout of the enemy troops. In the ensuing pursuit Asahel, Joab's brother, follows Abner. Looking behind him, the Israelite general sees the fleet-footed youth hot on his trail. "Is it you, Asahel?" calls Abner as he runs; "It is I," answers the youth (v. 20). "Turn aside to one of the young men and take his spoil," (v. 21) says Abner. When the latter persists, Abner cries out a second time: "Turn aside from following me. Why should I smite you to the ground?" (v. 22a). But Asahel again ignores the warning. The curious fact is not that Asahel is willing to risk his neck in hopes of killing Abner but that Abner seems so reluctant to dispatch Asahel. "How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" yells Abner to his pursuer (v. 22b).

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[9] Budde's emendation, KHC, p. 205.

Certainly, Abner is not afraid of Asahel. Nor does the idea of slaying a younger, less-experienced soldier bother him. Underlying Abner's warnings is rather the popular belief that, should Asahel perish, his elder brother would become responsible for avenging his death. Not until vengeance was exacted could the angry soul of the dead man rest. Moreover, that Abner acts as a soldier in the line of duty and, more importantly, in self-defense, does not matter. At least during this period of Israelite history, the slayer was still held accountable for his deed.[10] Abner cautions Asahel to turn back. If at all possible, he wants to avoid a blood feud, which all too often ends only with the extermination of both houses. Then in an instant Abner wheels and strikes Asahel "in the belly with the butt[11] of his spear, so that the spear came out of his back" (v. 23). Despite Abner's warnings and contrary to his wishes—Asahel is dead.

With Asahel fallen, Joab and Abishai take up the chase. But Abner rallies the Benjaminites around him on the hill of Ammah and calls to Joab: "Shall the sword devour forever?" (v. 26a). Will there be no end to this killing,[12] asks Abner—Judean against Benjaminite, Israelite against Israelite, brother against brother? (v. 27b). Already the taste of battle is acid in his mouth. To slay a fellow Hebrew, perhaps even a man Abner knew personally (v. 20) gives no satisfaction to the heart of the warrior. Nonetheless, Abner and his men will run no longer. If Joab persists, the Israelites will fight from their new position on the hill of Ammah. "Do you not know that the end will be bitter?" warns Abner; "How long will it be before you bid your people turn from the pursuit of their brethren?" (v. 26b).

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[10] See Erwin Merz, Die Blutrache bei den Israeliten ("Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament," ed. Rudolf Kittel, Vol. 20; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916), p. 75. Cf. Moshe Greenberg ("Avenger of Blood," IDB, Vol. I, p. 321), who points out that "slaying in combat does not normally privilege blood redemption."

[11] See de Vaux, LStB, p. 154.

Joab's reply seems polite under the circumstances. "As God lives, if you had not spoken," says Joab, "then only after the morning[13] would the people have given up the pursuit of their brethren" (v. 27). Joab seems almost grateful to Abner for his suggestion. He makes no attempt to blame his foe for the outbreak of hostilities. Nor does Joab charge Abner with his brother's death—a strange omission, some scholars think.[14] Had Joab known of Asahel's fate, it is argued, he would hardly have consented to stop the fighting.[15] But this is to reckon without the shrewdness and cold-bloodedness of Joab. Unlike Asahel, Joab knew how to temper his impulses with restraint. After all, his forces had already won a considerable victory; three hundred and sixty Israelites were dead. Joab could easily afford to postpone his reckoning with Abner. Meanwhile, he cloaks his anger in words of sweet reasonableness. If others, including possibly David or Abner himself, mistake Joab's politeness for indulgence, that is their own fault.

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[12] "The Bedawin still shrink from the extermination of a clan, even in bitter feuds," notes Smith (ICC, p. 272).

[13] Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 188.

It is possible that Joab's victory at Gibeon altered the balance of power in Palestine. Three hundred and sixty deaths in a single battle was a sizeable loss for Abner, since his entire army numbered probably a thousand or two thousand soldiers.[16] Yet the text does not say that this defeat reduced Ishbaal's influence west of the Jordan or established David's position in central Palestine. In fact, the battle of Gibeon may have been no more than a skirmish, a single episode in the "long war" (II. iii 1) between David and Ishbaal. It is not the battle itself or even the immediate political consequences of Abner's defeat which accounts for the inclusion of this episode in "the Story of David's Rise." The indispensable element is rather the slaying of Asahel,[17] a deed which infects its perpetrator with bloodguilt. It is this that brings about the downfall of Abner and the northern kingdom, thus paving the way for David's final triumph.

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[14] See Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 129. Cf. Budde's comment on ii 23b (KHC, p. 206).

[15] Ibid.

[16] Cf. Gressmann, SAT, II:1, p. 129.

Joab Assassinates Abner (iii 1-39)[1]

Abner's break with Ishbaal, his pact with David, and his untimely end is a story of intrigue, subversion, and betrayal. The climax is, of course, David's reaction to the assassination of Abner. Like all successful politicians, David knows how to turn a serious setback to his own advantage. How the king, here represented as the politician and conspirator[2] par excellence, cleared himself of any involvement in the death of Abner is the subject of chapter iii.

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[17] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 184.

[1] Verses 2-5 and II v 13-16 belong with the statistical information recorded in II Samuel viii (Wellhausen, Komposition, p. 256). Both lists were probably inserted in "the Story of David's Rise" by the final compiler of the books of Samuel. The references to the births of Absalom (iii 3) and Solomon (v 14) point forward, of course, to the events described in the Succession History (II Samuel ix-xx; I Kings i-ii). In this way the final compiler ties the two narratives together. Cf. Nübel, Davids Aufstieg, p. 69. Contrast Eissfeldt (Komposition, p. 26), who maintains that vv. 2-5 are an integral part of chapter iii.

As the story opens, Abner and Ishbaal are quarreling bitterly. Ishbaal accuses Abner of availing himself of Rizpah, one of the concubines in the royal harem. "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?" demands Ishbaal, rightly construing Abner's act as an attempt to usurp his authority as king. "Am I a dog's head of Judah?" answers Abner; "this day I keep showing loyalty to the house of Saul your father . . . and yet you charge me with a fault concerning a woman" (v. 8). Abner's manner is defiant, arrogant, and treasonable. Prior to this incident, he had suspected that Ishbaal's reign was not in the best interests of the northern tribes (v. 17); now he is convinced of it. By his rebuke Ishbaal shows that he is too dull-witted to see that his general is already the de facto ruler of Israel. Now by his silence in the face of Abner's defiance, he shows that he is too impotent to protect the sanctity of his own harem. "God do so to Abner, and more also," says Abner, "if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him . . . and set up the throne of David over Israel, from Dan to Beersheba" (v. 10).

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[2] See Rudolf Kittel, A History of the Hebrews, Vol. II, trans. Hope W. Hogg and E. B. Speirs ("Theological Translation Library," Vol. VI, ed. T. K. Cheyne and A. B. Bruce; Oxford: Williams and Norgate, 1896) p. 147.

Although Abner takes the initiative in proposing negotiations, David sets the conditions. "You will not see my face," says David, "unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face" (v. 13). This stipulation is important for two reasons. First, by remarrying Michal, David can lay claim publicly to the throne of Israel. As son-in-law, his kinship with the former monarch is closer than that of Abner, for example, who is either uncle[3] or nephew[4] to Saul (I Samuel xiv 50). Second, in demanding and securing Michal from Ishbaal,[5] David again exposes the weakness of the present Israelite government. The pathetic sight of Paltiel, Michal's husband, weeping behind his wife as she travels to Bachurim, graphically illustrates the feebleness[6] of Ishbaal. Whether

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[3] I Chronicles viii 33; ix 36.

[4] See Thenius's emendation of xiv 51 (KeH^2, p. 66), on the basis of which Abner becomes Saul's cousin, not his uncle.

[5] Cf. KHC (pp. 210-211), where Budde refutes the source critics who have called into question the integrity of verses 12-16. The same arguments are equally valid when applied to the theories of Noth (History of Israel, p. 184, n. 1) or H. J. Stoebe ("David und Mikal," Von Ugarit nach Qumran, p. 233).

[6] Cf. de Vaux, LStB, p. 157, n. "b." Cf. also A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Second Book of Samuel—with Maps, Notes and Introduction, Vol. X, pt. 2 of The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge: The University Press, 1889), p. 70.

Michal goes immediately to Hebron from Bachurim or waits for Abner to accompany her is not related. In either case, she has been forcibly separated from her husband with the consent of her brother, the King of Israel.

It is no accident that Abner chooses to approach the elders of Israel on David's behalf at this particular time. Seeing the public humiliation of Ishbaal at the hands of Abner and David, it is clear to everyone that Saul's son is no longer fit to be king. A ruler who is unable to stand up to his own subordinates is certainly in no position to lead his people against a formidable foreign power such as the Philistines. David, on the other hand, is an acceptable and attractive leader to many Israelites precisely because of his effectiveness against the Philistines. This is the heart of Abner's appeal to the elders: "For the Lord has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies'" v. 18). In sending Abner to make this speech, David scores a propaganda triumph. No man is more popular or more persuasive with the northern tribes than Abner.

When Abner finally comes to Hebron, he arrives flushed with the success of his parleys with the elders of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin. "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord, the king," pledges

Abner to David, "that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires" (v. 21). What Abner expects in return is not indicated; however, it is unlikely that anything less than command of David's army and second place in his government would have satisfied the strong man of the north. If this were the arrangement, it would easily account for Joab's absence from Hebron at the time of Abner's visit. In all probability, David saw to it personally that his commander was away on an expedition. Until he returns, Joab does not know that Abner has been invited to Hebron, let alone that David has been dealing with Abner behind his back. Hence, David not only conspires with Abner to de-throne Ishbaal but also to demote Joab. No wonder Joab is furious when he is told, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has let him go, and he has gone in peace" (v. 23).

"Why is it," demands Joab of his lord, "that you have sent him away, so that he is gone?" (v. 24). For Abner to dine at the king's table and to depart "in peace" means that he has been formally received as David's guest. As the host, David is no less responsible for Abner's safety than for that of his own family.[7] Joab knows this. Yet he is so angry with David that he determines to wait no longer for his vengeance on Abner. Sending messengers to overtake and bring Abner back to Hebron, Joab takes the unsuspecting Israelite aside for a private conversation. "And there he smote him in the belly, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother" (v. 27).

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[7] Merz, Die Blutrache bei den Israeliten, p. 77.

For David, of course, Joab's treachery is more than a regrettable crime of passion; it is an unpardonable political blunder. When Abner left his house for Mahanaim, David has every reason to expect that the two kingdoms would soon be united under his leadership. Never before had his plans for himself and his people seemed so close to being realized. But the murder of Abner, whatever Joab's motives, completely shattered these hopes. Who will now believe that David, ambitious and cunning as he was, had nothing to do with Abner's death? Had not David lured the murdered man to Hebron, feted him and his men to put them off their guard, thus allowing Joab to do his dirty work? What other conclusions could the men of Israel draw?

However, David's anger and frustration arise from a danger far more sinister than the immediate political repercussions of Joab's treachery. The real threat is that Abner's blood will besmirch the head and hands of David and his sons for as long as they rule over Israel.[8] "I and my kingdom are for ever guiltless before the Lord for the blood of Abner the son of Ner" (v. 28), cries David. Let the afflictions of bloodguilt "fall upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house; and may the house of Joab never be without one who has a discharge, or who is leprous, or who holds a spindle, or who is slain by the sword, or who lacks bread" (v. 29). Note in particular the fourth item in David's curse: death "by the sword." The threat of assassination, more than anything else, is the constant fear of a royal house. So it is not surprising that David should wish to shift this danger from his own line to that of Joab.

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[8] For a recent discussion of the meaning of bloodguilt in the Old Testament, see Klaus Koch, "Sein Blut Bleibe Auf Seinem Haupt," VT, XII:4 (October, 1962), 396-416. See especially 405-414.

In order to demonstrate his innocence to the people of Hebron, the king himself leads the funeral procession for Abner, an honor accorded only to high officials and close relatives of the crown.[9] Following Abner's bier, David tears his garments, girds on sackcloth, weeps loudly, and commands all the people to participate in these rites. Beside Abner's grave David recites a dirge in memory of the fallen hero. "Should Abner die as a fool dies?" (v. 33b). He was put to death like a common criminal,[10] mourns David, yet his "hands were not bound" and his "feet were not fettered" (v. 34). There is no honor in death when the victim strikes not a single blow in his own defense. As at the funeral at Ziklag (II.Samuel i), David fasts until evening, solemnly refusing to "take bread or anything till the sun goes down" (v. 35). Seeing this, "all the people" are deeply moved. Not only David's subjects in Hebron but "all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to slay Abner the son of Ner" (v. 37).

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[9] Cf. II Samuel i 11-12, 17-27.

[10] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 193-94.

Not everyone, however, is equally impressed by David's display of grief. Perhaps the assassination of Ishbaal follows too quickly upon that of Abner. Perhaps the king of Judah derives too much profit from the elimination of his rivals. In any case, long after David had explained these murders to the apparent satisfaction of most Israelites, resentment still smoulders in the minds of some.[11] In addition, the spectre of blood continues to haunt the memory of David. Here he tries to excuse himself, saying that he is "too weak" to avenge Abner's death. But he does not forget the treachery of this day. On his deathbed David calls Solomon to his side. "You know what Joab did to me," says the king; "do not let his head go down in Sheol in peace" (I Kings ii 5-6).

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[11] See infra, pp. 203-04.

David Avenges the Murder of Ishbaal (iv 1-12)[1]

For political opportunists such as the two sons of Rimmon, who were guerrilla captains under Ishbaal's command, the time seems ripe for assassination. With Abner dead, Ishbaal is afraid, and "all Israel was thrown into confusion"[2] (v. 1). Moreover, Ba'anah and Rechab, like many Israelites, know of David's designs upon the northern kingdom. His plan probably did not include killing the present king of Israel; imprisonment or exile was more than adequate for a man as ineffectual as Ishbaal. Yet rarely was a king in ancient times merely deposed. With his authority ordinarily went his life. With this in mind the sons of Rimmon proceed with their plan, timing their arrival at Ishbaal's house to coincide with the noonday siesta. Softly they slip past the guard into the royal bedchamber,[3] where they stab the king in his sleep and behead him. The next morning they appear in Hebron with Ishbaal's head as their trophy, expecting a handsome reward for their trouble.

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[1] Verses 2b-3 derive from a later editor, who wishes "to explain how a man could be a Benjaminite and yet live in Beeroth, which was originally a member of the Gibeonite league of Canaanite cities which maintained independence of Israel" (Caird, IB, p. 1065). Verse 4 belongs to the account of II Samuel ix, where David brings Jonathan's son to the court (Wellhausen, Komposition, p. 256).

[2] Smith's translation, ICC, p. 283.

[3] The LXX of verse 6 provides a better reading than MT—so RSV. Cf. Hertzberg's fanciful interpretation of the traditional text (Samuel, p. 264).

The parallels between this incident and those of chapters xxiv and xxvi, where Saul is a prey no less vulnerable than Ishbaal, are numerous. As in the earlier narratives, there is an attempt to justify homicide on the grounds that the victim is an enemy of David. "Here is the head of Ishbaal, the son of Saul, your enemy," say the men (v. 8a). Saul is the one "who sought your life," they continue, an accusation made by David in chapters xxiv and xxvi (vv. 12 and 20, respectively). Ishbaal falls so easily into the assasin's power that they credit the Lord with their good fortune (cf. xxiv 5; xxvi 8). They are convinced that "the Lord has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring" (v. 8).

However, the attempt of the sons of Rimmon to represent the murder of Ishbaal as a divine judgment on Saul fails completely. Long before this, David has repudiated the notion that the Lord bids him or anyone else to avenge his bad treatment at the hands of Saul. The Lord alone "redeems my life out of every adversity," says David (v. 9), an idea expressed several times in the dialogue of chapters xxiv-xxvi. (Cf. especially xxvi 24: "May he deliver me מִכָּל צָרָה.") Moreover, David has given his word that he will not cut off Saul's "seed" (xxiv 23; cf. II. iv 8). Rather, David's responsibility is to protect the Lord's anointed and all his descendants from those who would bring them to harm. David reminds Ba'anah and Rechab that he seized[4] and slew an Amalekite messenger whose only fault—according to the present text—lay in expecting David to rejoice at the news of Saul's death. "How much more," exclaims the king, "when wicked men have slain a righteous man in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth?" (v. 11).

Whether David is genuinely unhappy or feigns displeasure[5] upon hearing of Ishbaal's murder is not easy to determine. His stern condemnation of the sons of Rimmon may have been calculated to curry favor with Saul's relatives and former allies, although the assassination of Ishbaal was less a threat to David's relations with Israel than was that of Abner. The latter was extremely popular, whereas the position of Saul's son was already so shaky that his death could not have been regarded as a serious loss. Still, David wants to show his esteem for the family of Saul. The head of Ishbaal receives an honorable burial, and the punishment meted out to Rechab and Ba'anah corresponds to the gruesomeness of their crime. "And David commanded his young men, and they killed them, and cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron" (v. 12).

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[4] Actually, David's servants killed the Amalekite messenger (II Samuel i 13-16). However, ". . . such inaccurracies frequently occur in the speeches of the early source," contends Caird (IB, p. 1067). See *supra*, p. 128.

[5] Morgenstern doubts David's sincerity. See "David and Jonathan," JBL, LXXVIII, p. 325.

KING OVER ISRAEL (II. v)

The text of II Samuel v has been expanded at a number of points for a variety of reasons. First, the perplexing etiology, "Therefore it is said, 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house,'" (v. 8b) has been appended to verse 8a. What this means, when or why it was added is largely a matter of conjecture.[1] Second, the emissary of Hiram, King of Tyre, seems out of place here. David must first subdue the Philistines before he can attract international attention and establish diplomatic relations with Tyre or any other foreign power.[2] This pericope was probably a part of the annals of II Samuel viii at one time[3] (cf. II. viii 9-12 in particular). The same may also be true of the family register in verses 13-16, which would have been recorded by David's official scribe, Jehoshaphat (II. viii 16). Both pericopes (vv. 11-12 and 13-16) may have been removed from the court records to their present context by the compiler who brought "the Story of David's Rise" and "the Succession History" together (see _supra_, p. 155, n. 1). The final interpolation, i.e., the chronological notice of verses 4-5, is generally agreed to be the work of the deuteronomic historian.[4] The original text, therefore, consists of verses 1-3; 6-8a; 9-10; and 17-25.

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[1] De Vaux (LStB, p. 164), takes v. 8b to be a reference to Leviticus xxi 18-23: "For no one who has a blemish may draw near, a man blind or lame . . . shall not come near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries." Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 260 and McKane, TBC, p. 202.

[2] Caird, IB, p. 1073.

[3] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 196, n. 2.

Behind this text lie three rather concise but extremely fertile traditions, which our author appropriates and arranges in accord with the principal purposes of his narrative. In verses 1-3 the elders of Israel elect David monarch over the northern tribes, which means that now all Israelites recognize David as the sacral king. Thus David becomes the "Lord's anointed" in the eyes of all the people. After his elevation David captures Jerusalem and makes it his capital (vv. 6-7), but at the same time—if the text adopted here is correct[5]—he grants a general amnesty to the inhabitants of the city, thus avoiding bloodguilt (v. 8a). The last episode sees David repulse the Philistines twice, both times with the aid of the oracle (vv. 17-25). On this note David achieves his goal, and the story reaches its conclusion.

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[4] See Noth, _Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien_, p. 63. Cf. Weiser, _The Old Testament_, p. 168.

[5] See _infra_, p. 180.

David Anointed King over Israel (v 1-3)

When the northern tribes come to Hebron to make David king over Israel, their decision is prompted in part by practical considerations. First of all, David is a kinsman: "Behold we are your bone and flesh" (v. 1). To the relatives of Michal, of course, David has even closer ties. Second, as noted by Abner in his appeal to the elders of Israel (iii 17-18), David's gifts as a warrior are exceptional. Against the Philistines his methods were far more effective than those of Saul and Jonathan. The latter depended too much on the large and unwieldy conscript army,[1] usually referred to as "all Israel" (xxiii 8; xxiv 3; xxvi 2; xxviii 4). David, on the other hand, relied exclusively on professional soldiers ("his men"), even prior to his break with Saul. Here the tribes of Israel assure David that they appreciate his efforts to defend the nation from its foes. "In times past, when Saul was king over us," they note, "it was you that led out and brought in Israel" (v. 2a).

However, the pragmatism involved in the election of David, both here and at ii 1-4a, does not make this primarily "a political move."[2] Rather, the tribes come to Hebron expressly to acknowledge David as the one designated king by the Lord long before they were aware of it. "And the Lord said to you," they confess, "'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel'" (v. 2b). Who articulated this promise to David or when it was given the text does not indicate. Budde[3] and Eissfeldt[4] conjecture that some such prediction was made in Ahimelech's oracle at Nob (xxii 10), but for some reason it has dropped out of the tradition. In any event, all the characters, friend and foe alike, assume that the Lord has put his seal of approval on David and will guide him to the throne of Israel sooner or later. Now at last the tribes of Israel arrive at the same conclusion, probably more on the basis of the actual achievements of David than on any other criterion, e.g., previous designation by a prophet or charismatic endowment.[5] Nonetheless, this conclusion is for the tribes of Israel as much a theological insight as an acknowledgment of the political facts of life. In David's deeds they see the guiding and electing hand of the Lord. If this be the case, then the fact that David has come to his kingship by a different route than Saul does not really matter.

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[1] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, pp. 188-89.

[2] Ibid, p. 186. See supra, pp. 144-45.

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[3] Budde, KHC, p. 210.

[4] Eissfeldt, Komposition, p. 27.

[5] Cf. John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 177, n. 30. Hereafter referred to as Bright, History of Israel.

The real emphasis of the tradition is, however, upon the similarity and continuity of the two kingships (see above, pp. 134-35). Both arise in response to a specific historical situation, i.e., the threat of Philistine expansionism. "By the hand of my servant David I will save my people from the hand of the Philistines . . ." says the Lord (iii 18); the same statement is made of Saul prior to his accession (I Samuel ix 16 and x 2). Moreover, David is proclaimed king by "all the tribes of Israel" (v. 1), as was Saul at Mizpah (I Samuel x 17-24). It is also inferred by II Samuel ii 1-4a that David, like Saul, was selected by the holy oracle (I Samuel x 22; see above, pp. 145-46). But regardless of the mechanics of the earlier election at Hebron, which is no more than a partial fulfillment of David's goals in any case, the present transaction takes place "before the Lord" (v. 3). This phrase, which also occurs in Saul's coronation at Gilgal, forms still another link between David's kingship and that of his predecessor (cf. I. xi 15).

No less significant is the fact that the tribes now refer to David instead of Saul as the nagid or "prince" over Israel. On etymological grounds J. J. Glück has argued that nagid is a complimentary title not ordinarily attributed to a king or ruler;[6] it indicates the loving care "extended to the weaker members of the flock, as being characteristic of the ideal ruler."[7] On traditio-historical grounds, however, Alt maintains that in the northern kingdom nagid is a technical term referring to the heir apparent, a man chosen in each instance without regard to his previous accomplishments or family ties but solely on the basis of the Lord's command.[8] To be sure, this is a possible nuance of the term at I Samuel ix 16 and x 1, where the Lord reveals his plans for Saul. First Saul is appointed nagid by the prophet Samuel; then he is acclaimed king by the people. In this way the primacy of the divine initiative is preserved, and the amphictyonic league retains at least some measure of autonomy vis-a-vis the institution of kingship. According to Alt, this continued to be the practice in the northern kingdom for almost two centuries after David had induced the southern tribes to accept the principle of dynastic succession.[9]

The merits of this view cannot be debated here; suffice it to say that Alt's theory has been severely and justly criticized by Beyerlin[10] and Thornton.[11] What is important for the present study is that the term nagid has been appropriated from the Saul tradition and applied to David at an early date, probably for the same reason that other aspects of Saul's accession are imitated or duplicated by that of David. Possibly the title was first transferred to David in the dynastic oracle of Nathan (II Samuel vii),[12] which may have been used on a regular basis by the royal cultus of Jerusalem.[13] This oracle contains a brief summary of the various stages of David's rise. "'I took you from the pasture . . . that you should be nagid over my people Israel'," says the Lord; "'and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off your enemies from before you . . .'" (II Samuel vii 8-9). Here, of course, as also in Abigail's prophecy (I. xxv 30) and the elders' confession

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[6] J. J. Glück, "Nagid-Shepherd," VT XIII (April, 1963), p. 148.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Alt, "Die Staatenbildung . . . ," K.S. II, pp. 23, 42.

[9] Alt, "Das Königtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda," K.S. II, pp. 124-26.

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[10] Walter Beyerlin, "Das Königscharisma bei Saul," ZAW LXXIII:2 (1961), 186-201.

[11] T. C. G. Thornton, "Charismatic Kingship in Israel and Judah," JThSt N. S. XIV:1 (April, 1963), 1-11.

[12] Cf. Martin Noth, "David und Israel in 2. Samuel 7," Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament (2d ed. with appendix; "Theologische Bücherei, "Munchen: Chr. Kaiser, 1960), p. 339, n. 12.

[13] See Hans-Joachim Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament: Untersuchungen zu den Liedern von Jahwes Thronbesteigung ("Beiträge zur historischen Theologie," Vol. 13, ed. Gerhard Ebeling; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1951, 35-40.

(II. v 2b), nagid suggests something quite different from a charismatic leader soon to be acclaimed king for life by the amphictyonic league. He is rather an ideal monarch ("shepherd of my people Israel"); an heir to a "sure house" (I. xxv 28-31)—a throne that the Lord will establish "for ever" (II. vii 8-9; 12-13). Nagid, therefore, as baptized by the David tradition, belongs as much to the "royalist complex of ideas"[14] as melek. To David, as to his predecessor, both titles are attributed.

That David, like Saul, is consecrated by anointment is the final item of this account. The fact of David's anointing is to the early tradition more important than who anointed him, as is attested both here and at II Samuel ii 1-4a. This is also indicated by a statement inserted into Nathan's mouth in the Succession History.[15] "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel,'" Nathan reminds David (II. Samuel xii 7). Neither the occasion nor the human instrument of the anointing is specified by Nathan's speech. In the later tradition, however, as represented by the Chronicler's version of II Samuel v 1-3, there is an unmistakable allusion to the clandestine anointing of David at Bethlehem (I. xvi 1-13). To the report, "And they anointed David king over Israel" (II. v 3c), Chronicles adds: "According to the word of the Lord by Samuel" (I Chronicles xi 3c). This addition is, of course, based on I Samuel xvi 1-13, a tradition the secondary and legendary character of which is widely recognized.[16] In fact, apart from this one reference, the anointing of David by Samuel is neither mentioned nor presupposed at any point in "the Story of David's Rise."

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[14] See supra, p. 90, n. 6.

[15] Verses 7-11 of II Samuel xii represent an embellishment of the original text (see Rost, Thronnachfolge, pp. 92-94).

The significance of the rite performed by "the elders of Israel"[17] can probably be determined from the ancient tradition describing the anointing of Saul at I Samuel x 1-16. With his consecration Saul receives his appointment as nagid, his authority to rule over the people of the Lord, and, most important of all, the promise of the charisma. To be seized by the Lord's Spirit, thus to participate in the divine "life"—this is no doubt the basis of the doctrine of the king's inviolability.[18] For as long as he lives, the person of the king is sacrosanct. To harm him is to invade the sphere of the holy and to threaten the divine "life" which the Lord has imparted to the king. Hence, not only is the ruler empowered with the authority to judge and to protect his people at the time of his elevation; by virtue of his anointment he himself is protected from those who would plot against him. Now that Saul is dead, it is David who needs this protection. With this in mind, in all probability, the writer concludes his account: "And they anointed David king over Israel" (v. 3c).

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[16] Wellhausen sums up the position held by many interpreters: "Saul alone, according to the old tradition, was made king in a divine, i.e., an overpowering and ideal manner: David was made king in a tedious human way, and after many intermediate stages" (Prolegomena, p. 269). Cf. Nowack, HKAT, p. 79 and Gressmann, SAT II:1, pp. 63-64.

[17] "Some scholars have assumed that ancient Israel practiced, beside the theocratic anointment of the king by a priest or prophet, a democratic anointment in which the people anointed the king through its representatives, the elders," notes Szikszai (article on "Anoint," IDB, Vol. I, p. 139). "However, the biblical evidence is not sufficient for the support of this theory," concludes Szikszai.

The Capture of Jerusalem (v 6-10)

David's strategy against the Jebusites in Jerusalem is, to say the least, unclear. As David prepares for the siege, for some reason the defenders place "the lame and the blind"[1] on the city walls. "You will not come in here," they shout at David, "for the lame and blind will ward you off" (v. 6). This sounds like a taunt, as if to say, "Our city is so strong that even the halt and blind can fend you off." The logical reaction on David's part is, of course, an angry determination to make the mockers eat their words. Thus the Revised Standard Version proposes: "Whoever would smite the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and blind, who are hated by David's soul" (v. 8). To secure this meaning, it is necessary to substitute עלה ("to go up") for נגע ("to touch") and also to insert the verb נכה ("to attack") before "the lame and the blind." Moreover, this conjecture depends upon the identification of the Zinnor (צִנּוֹר) with the famous tunnel discovered in 1867 by Sir C. Warren.[2] This perpendicular shaft runs from the one natural spring in Jerusalem to the top of a hill "on which the original fortress of Zion must have been situated."[3] Many scholars believe that David's men surprised the Jebusites by ascending the water shaft,[4] a view which finds some support in the

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[18] So Beyerlin, "Das Königscharisma bei Saul," ZAW LXXIII:2, p. 191. Cf. Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), p. 104.

[1] Carlson suggests that "the lame and the blind" may be an allusion "to a group of cultic officials" (David, the chosen King, p. 57, n.2). Stoebe, on the other hand, thinks that "the lame and the blind" is an epithet for those in David's army who lack the boldness and the imagination to penetrate the fortress of Zion. These soldiers must be culled from the ranks before David can hope to capture Jerusalem. See H. J. Stoebe, "Die Einnahme Jerusalems," ZDPV LXXIII:1 (1957), pp. 87-92. Cf. Hertzberg's objections to Stoebe's hypothesis in Samuel, p. 269, n. "d".

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[2] See Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 260.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, pp. 259-60 and de Vaux, LStB, p. 164. Simons argues that David's troops stormed the slopes in order to "reach" the water shaft, hence, to cut off the water life-line of the city. See J. Simons, Jerusalem in the Old Testament: Researches and Theories (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), p. 172.

Chronicler's account. Although Chronicles does not mention the Zinnor, it describes a situation in which David challenges his men to some manuever requiring exceptional bravery. "Whoever shall smite the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander," promises David (I Chronicles xi 6a). According to Chronicles, Joab takes up the challenge and becomes David's general. If this is an authentic account, then the translation of the Revised Standard Version must be regarded as at least a close approximation to the meaning of the cryptic text under discussion.

However, there are good reasons to doubt that the Chronicler's version of II Samuel v 6-9 is reliable. For one thing, Chronicles omits the most difficult parts of the Samuel text, namely, the references to the Zinnor and "the lame and the blind." Then, too, as W. E. Barnes[5] has observed, the three elements necessary to understand David's conquest as a gigantic and daring military operation—so obviously the Chronicler's view—are missing from Samuel. Chronicles imagines David and "all Israel" on their way to Jerusalem, whereas the present text speaks more accurately of "David and his men" (I Chronicles xi 4: cf. II Samuel v 1). Second, David offers no reward for bravery in Samuel; this element is indispensable in the Chronicles' narrative. Third, neither Joab nor any other Israelite "goes up" against the city in II Samuel v 6-9; the verb עלה, belongs exclusively to I Chronicles xi 6. Hence, to make Chronicles the basis for interpreting the equivalent event in II Samuel is a dubious procedure.

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[5] W. Emery Barnes, "David's 'Capture' of the Jebusite 'Citadel' of Zion," Expositor, VII (1914), p. 30.

A more attractive hypothesis has been proposed by Budde,[6] who sees in David's words a call for amnesty rather than a challenge to bravery. "Whoever smites a Jebusite touches his own neck [i.e., brings his own life into danger[7]]," suggests Budde,[8] emending _Zinnor_ to צורו ("his own neck"). This interpretation assumes, first of all, that the battle is over before David makes his statement, a supposition supported by the previous verse: "Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion" (v. 7). Next, Budde is one of several scholars who argue that _Zinnor_ represents some part of the human body: "neck" (Budde);[9] "throat" (Wellhausen);[10] "joint" (Albright);[11] and "male member" (Dillman).[12] The view of these scholars makes it possible to retain the word, "to touch," a verb which presents no small difficulty to the usual translation of Zinnor. Thus David, according to Budde, does not call upon his men to scale the "water shaft" in verse 8. Rather his statement is a stern warning issued immediately after the city has fallen. Anyone who harms a Jebusite will—to put it colloquially—"cut his own throat."

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[6] Cf. Budde, _KHC_, p. 221.

[7] Cf. Driver, _Notes on Samuel_, p. 261.

[8] Budde, _KHC_, p. 221. [9] _Ibid_.

[10] Wellhausen, _Text der Samuelis_, p. 164.

[11] W. F. Albright, "The Sinnor and the Story of David's Capture of Jerusalem," _JPOS_ II:4 (1922), p. 289.

[12] _Ibid_ (see Albright's discussion).

That such an amnesty was indeed granted by the Judeans at some point in their relationship with the Jebusites is proved by the traditions preserved at Joshua xv 63 and Judges i 21:[13] "But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out; so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah to this day" (Joshua xv 63). As for David, his dealings with the Jebusites are unusually congenial. When he decides to build an altar on Jebusite property (II. xxiv), he does not seize the land like a conqueror; he buys it instead from "Araunah the Jebusite," as if he were a friend or a fellow Israelite. Moreover, not long after David takes up residence in Jerusalem, Zadok suddenly takes his place alongside Abiathar as a prominent priest in the kingdom of David. Several scholars are convinced that Zadok was either the former king of

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[13] Cf. Caird, IB, p. 1072.

Jerusalem or else a priest in the Jebusite cultus.[14] Hence, the Jebusites had apparently worked out an agreement—first, with the Judean tribes in the immediate vicinity, then later, with David. Israel had a similar covenant with the Gibeonites (Joshua ix 3-15), which, as we learn in II Samuel xxi, Saul made the mistake of violating. "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house," protest the men of Gibeon, "because he has put the Gibeonites to death" (II. xxi 1). This was a mistake David had no intention of repeating. On the contrary, David spares the citizens of Jerusalem, for "the lame and the blind David's soul does not[15] hate" (v. 8a).

Two Battle Oracles: "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" (v 17-25)

The story of David's final battle with the Philistines seems out of place. According to the present sequence, David is anointed king over Israel; he takes possession of Jerusalem; only then do the Philistines feel themselves threatened enough to declare war on David. However, the opening clause of this third episode (vv. 17-25) gives quite a different picture of the original order of events. "When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel"—an occurrence described in verse 3—"all the Philistines went up in search of David' (v. 17a). Here it is said that David's pact with the elders of Israel was an immediate cause of alarm to the Philistines—"all" of them. They could no more tolerate an alliance of the two kingdoms under David than a united confederacy under Saul Quickly their armies swarm up the Rephaim valley west of Jerusalem, hoping either to prevent David from beginning his reign over Israel or at least from joining forces with the army of the northern tribes.[1] At this point David "went down to the stronghold"—yet another indication that the original sequence of these traditions was verses 1-3, 17-25, and 6-10.[2] In the present text it would appear that the "stronghold" of verse 17 is the same as that of verse 9, i.e., the fortress of Zion. However, in Hebrew one never "goes down" but always "goes up" to Jerusalem.[3] Thus the "hold" that the text has in mind is some wilderness retreat,[4] as is mentioned in I Samuel xxiii 14, xxiv 1 and 23, or perhaps the cave of Adullam (cf. II. xxiii 13-14). The question is, therefore, why verses 17-25 were removed from their original context to the end of chapter v.

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[14] For a sizeable bibliography, see Aubrey R. Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), p. 46, n.l.

[15] Read לא שׂנאה for שׂנאה with Budde, KHC, p. 221. Cf. Driver's criticisms, Notes on Samuel, p. 261.

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[1] Noth, History of Israel, p. 188.

[2] Cf. Driver, Notes on Samuel, p. 263.

[3] Kennedy, NCB, p. 215.

[4] Cf. Nübel's note on מְצוּדָה in Davids Aufstieg, p. 114.

The answer is not to be found in the political or historical naiveté of the writer. Although the present text is ambiguous, the wilderness stronghold and the garrison of Zion are not necessarily confused in his mind. It is possible that he simply neglects to make the distinction clear. It is also possible that a later scribe deleted the word, "Adullam," thus identifying the two "strongholds."[5] In any event, the ambiguity is not due to misinformation on the part of the writer, because the reasons for the present order of events are ideological as well as historical.[6] Verses 6-10, for example, are as much concerned with David's generosity toward the Jebusites[7] as with the fall of Jerusalem. Likewise, verses 17-25 are almost entirely taken up with two battle oracles. The Israelite victories not only fulfill Abner's prophecy (II. iii 18) but complete a major thematic objective of "the Story of David's Rise": the conquest of the Philistines.

The question put to the oracle, "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" (v. 19a), comes on the occasion of the invasion mentioned above, the last and most dangerous crisis of David's rise. David's first reaction to the news of the Philistine advance is to withdraw from Hebron. He takes refuge in one of the "strongholds" occupied during the course of his flight from Saul, which could mean that David was at first planning some kind of guerrilla action, stretching over a period of months or years. If so, then David may have been expecting a directive similar to that which he received from the Lord at Keilah: retreat. However, the fighting abilities of David's band had improved considerably since the day when Saul had forced them to take to the wilds of Judah. They had skirmished successfully with the Philistines, the Geshurites, the Girzites, the Amalekites, and had also put the army of Abner to flight. Nonetheless, the decision to launch a full scale attack against the Philistine army is based solely on the response of the oracle. "Go up," says the Lord (v. 19b). This David does at Baal-perazim,[8] where the Israelites deal their enemies what appears to be an overwhelming defeat.

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[5] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 188, n. 1 and Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 273.

[6] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 187, n. 1.

[7] See supra, p. 180.

Yet in the following verse the Philistine army suddenly reappears in the Rephaim valley, and once again David seeks the oracle (v. 22-23). How much time has elapsed between the two invasions the text does not say. Nor are the circumstances of the second Philistine advance detailed. Is this offensive larger or better organized than the first? Is David again hiding in the stronghold? The absence of such information has led some critics to speculate that the battle of verses 22-25 is a secondary and unauthentic tradition.[9] However, it is unlikely that David repulsed the Philistines with a single victory. It is more probable that the ultimate Israelite success required several such victories, the reports of which may have been preserved in the royal archives.[10] One thing is certain: a Davidic triumph involving the use of the oracle would hardly have been omitted by the author of "the Story of David's Rise."

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[8] See Driver, *Notes on Samuel*, p. 263.

On the contrary, the writer deliberately disturbs the order of the materials at his disposal for the sake of his own interpretations. David and his men end their struggle as they began it at Keilah—by defeating the Philistines with the aid of the holy oracle. Here David is advised to undertake a rear guard manuever rather than a frontal assault. "You shall not go up," says the Lord; "go around to their rear, and come upon them opposite the balsam trees" (v. 23). Not until David hears the wind rustling (lit., "the sound of marching") in the tops of the trees is he to attack.

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[9] Cf. William R. Arnold, Ephod and Ark (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 41. Cf. also Caird, IB, p. 1076).

[10] Hertzberg, Samuel, p. 273.

Then he will know that the Lord has assured the victory without which David's kingdom cannot stand. "And David did as the Lord commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba to Gezer" (v. 25).

CONCLUSION

The Writer and his Materials

The models ordinarily used to describe a writer who assembles and moulds oral traditions, e.g., the Yahwist or the deuteronomic compiler, do not seem to apply to the author of "David's Rise," perhaps because his document stands much closer to the events than other historiography[1] of the Old Testament. Also, the traditions appropriated by our writer are more fluid and thus more malleable to his purposes than are those used by the authors of the Pentateuch. The individual responsible for the original "Story of David's Rise" exercises a considerable mastery over his materials, despite their diversity and peculiarities in style, emphasis, and content. The writer is an historian who has combined his "sources" into a remarkably powerful and coherent narrative. He is an author in the full sense of the word.

This is not to imply that the idiosyncracies and origins of the traditions at the writer's disposal are no longer visible. The *Sitz im Leben* of the Goliath narrative, for example, appears to have been cultic,[2] or at least the reference at xvii 47 to "all this assembly" ("congregation") points in this direction. The formal language and sacral kingship ideology of chapters xxiv and xxvi (I Samuel), on the other hand, suggest that these accounts owe some of their features to the Jerusalem palace.[3] The duplicate accounts of David sparing Saul's life may have been used to train young Hebrew noblemen in the ceremonial speech of Solomon's court. Von Rad[4] makes a similar observation with reference to the popular narrative at I Samuel xvi 14-23, where David is presented as a youth accomplished in the arts of music and speech as well as in the art of self-defense. According to von Rad,[5] this description reflects the image of the well-rounded courtier of Solomon's time, a significant departure from Saul's rustic entourage at Gibeah. If this view is correct, then I Samuel xvi 18 points to the influence of the Jerusalem palace at yet another point in the growth of the early David traditions.

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[1] For a discussion of "the Succession History" see *infra*, p. 192.

It is not always possible to identify the settings of the popular traditions or to define with precision the limits of the various narrative groups or "complexes." Nonetheless, the general outlines of these complexes can be determined, since many traditions have apparently crystallized around some particular motif or period in David's career. Moreover, the provenance of most narratives can be recognized from repeated mention of important landmarks or events which would have been remembered and recounted by certain clans. The Kenites and the Jerahmeelites[6] figure prominently in the accounts of David's adventures around Ziklag and are a likely "source" for these episodes. The Nob traditions[7] present a more realistic picture of David and may have been preserved by those who were critical of David's part in the tragic events of I Samuel xxii; perhaps the Gibeonites and others living in the vicinity of Nob passed these traditions on to the writer. The midbar[8] cycle was, of course, native to the wilderness of Judah, whereas the Hebron complex[9] originated in the environs of David's first capital. Both of the latter narrative groups were soon taken over and preserved by members of the Davidic court, in all probability. To be sure, some, perhaps many, traditions were widely circulated[10] in Israel and Judah. After all, these are tiny lands, and stories dealing with figures as famous as Saul and David were surely in great demand among their subjects, supporters, and detractors.

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[2] Cf. supra, p. 25.

[3] Cf. supra, pp. 72-75.

[4] Cf. von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg, p. 41.

[5] Ibid.

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[6] Cf. I. xxvii 10; xxx 26-31 and supra, pp. 101-02.

[7] Cf. I. xxi 2-10; xxii 1-23 (possibly I. xx) and supra, p. 50.

[8] Cf. I. xxiii 14-xxvi 25 and supra, pp. 66 ff.

[9] Cf. II. ii-iv and supra, pp. 140-41.

The variety of traditions is most clearly indicated by the contrasting images of David in the different complexes. At first David is the young gallant who woos and wins the king's daughter and the hearts of all Israel; he can do no wrong in the folk traditions of I Samuel xvi 14-xix 7. In the Nob complex, on the other hand, David is almost a desperado, who is willing to practice any deception on Ahimelech or wring any advantage from Jonathan in order to save his own neck. At Ziklag David is the "Robin Hood" who robs the Philistines and gives to the Judeans. The Goliath narrative depicts the hero as a precocious boy preacher whose sermon purports to teach "all the earth" that "there is a God in Israel." The picture of David in the lament from the "Book of Yashar"[11] is that of a sensitive, patriotic bard who is overwhelmed by the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. But David's most characteristic pose is struck by the court narratives, which see David as the self-righteous orator defending his reputation from the charge of bloodguilt or sacrilege. The diversity of these images does not, however, strike the reader as a composite of psychologically or historically irreconcilable conceptions of David. Taken together within the framework of "the Story of David's Rise" they seem rather an illuminating and more-or-less faithful portrait of a very complex man. David was in reality a deeply religious man as well as a scheming politician. Above all, he was Israel's most complete hero.

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[10] The "young hero" traditions of I. xvi 14-23; xviii 6-29; xix 1-7 (the "Gibeah complex") probably fall in this category. Cf. *supra*, pp. 13 ff.

[11] Cf. II. i 18-27.

To summarize: traditions come to the writer from the court, the local cult, and the folk narrators of Judah, which means that it is possible to understand these reports as self-contained narratives which are independent of any larger unity. At the same time "David's Rise" is also a connected narrative and tells a substantially reliable story of David and his times. The term "substantial" allows, of course, for the stylistic and theological embellishments of the court and cult traditions. "Reliable" means that these events took place very much in the way the writer describes them and that no occurrence in the original "David's Rise" can be dismissed as wholly unhistorical. Finally, the writer stands closest to the ideas of the court traditions, which reveal the basic interests and probable Sitz im Leben of the entire narrative.

Narrative Technique: a Comparison of "the Story of David's Rise" with "the Succession History"

Since Leonhard Rost's Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids, critics[1] have often praised II Samuel ix-xx; I Kings i-ii as a singular example of a fully informed, well-organized, eyewitness account, whose literary merits are unequalled in the historical books of the Old Testament. This description of "the Succession History" is not undeserved, but some scholars[2] have rightly questioned the subsequent inference that the author's methods and materials are altogether different from those of other narrators in I-II Samuel. What is meant, for example, by the notion of a "fully informed, eyewitness" account? Apparently, this does not mean that the narrator supplies detailed information about the vast social and political upheavals of David's time.[3] No, in this respect the narrative is no better informed than "David's Rise" or the early account of "Saul's Rise"[4] (I. xi; xiii-xiv). Like the latter writings, "the Succession History" concentrates more on the personal histories of Israel's leaders than on the larger socio-political problems of the nation or its relations to other peoples in Palestine. Moreover, there are evidences of poetic freedom at several places in II Samuel ix-xx (the intimate conversation of Amnon and Tamar,[5] for instance; II. xiii 10-14), which suggest that the narrator is not always describing occurrences he has witnessed with his own eyes. Some critics have plausibly argued that traditions other than the Michal episode (II. vi 20-23),[6] Nathan's oracle (II. vii),[7] and the Ammonite War Narrative (II. x 1-xi 1; xii 26-31)[8] circulated independently before the author's work. Gressmann[9] cites the story of David's kindness to Meribaal as a probable component of an oral complex which includes II Samuel iv 4, ix 1-13, and xxi 1-14 ("the Mephibosheth cycle"). Carlson believes that some of the more pejorative traditions, such as the Bathsheba episode, may have been formed or preserved originally by the Zadokite priesthood, who "found it to their advantage to transmit material of this kind, critical of the royal house."[10] The observations of these scholars do not detract from the unity or craftsmanship of "the Succession History," but they do challenge the idea that this writing can only be understood as an indivisible whole or as an "eyewitness" account, i.e., a composition based solely on the experiences of one man.[11] These arguments indicate that the writer's relationship to his materials is not unique in the books of Samuel and that the similarities between his work and that of "David's Rise" should not be overlooked.

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[1] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, "Der Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung im alten Israel," Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament ("Theologische Bücherei," VIII; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1961), pp. 173-78. Hereafter referred to as von Rad, Gesammelte Studien.

[2] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 19-21, and Carlson, David, the chosen King, pp. 131-39.

[3] Cf. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 358.

[4] Contrast von Rad, Gesammelte Studien, p. 176, who maintains that Samuel narratives prior to II Samuel ix-xx; I Kings i-ii cannot be properly called "history writing."

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[5] McKane (TBC, p. 19) follows Eissfeldt's lead in pointing to other examples of literary art and invention at II. xiv 4-20 (David's exchange with the woman of Tekoa), xvii 1-14 (Absalom's conference with Ahithophel), and xviii 10-14 (Joab's dispute with the messenger).

[6] Rost holds that the Ark Narrative (I. iv-vi; II. vi) was annexed to "the Succession History" by the author of the latter (Thronnachfolge, pp. 105-08). The barrenness of Michal (II. vi 23) prepares the way for the struggle of other would-be heirs to David's throne.

[7] Rost argues that the original ingredients of II Samuel vii are verses 1-7, 11b, 16, 18-21, 25 (26), 27-29 (Thronnachfolge, p. 74). Contrast Noth, Gesammelte Studien, pp. 343-45.

[8] The official record of David's War with the Ammonites provides the framework into which the author of II Samuel ix-xx fits the Bathsheba narrative (II. xi 2-xii 25), according to Rost (Thronnachfolge, p. 109).

[9] Cf. Gressmann, SAT II:1, pp. 143-44. Cf. Caspari,

Not only did both writers draw upon the testimony of others, their basic method is biographical,[12] as was noted above. The writers are telling a story of David's interactions with close friends and enemies, while events such as

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KAT, pp. 10 ff., 504 ff., who also regards II Samuel ix and xxi 1-14 as an oral unit.

[10] Cf. Carlson, David, the chosen King, p. 137.

[11] Cf. McKane, TBC, p. 21. Von Rad, on the other hand, vigorously opposes any attempt to analyze II Samuel ix-xx on traditio-historical lines (Gesammelte Studien, p. 175).

[12] Cf. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 358.

the enthronements at Hebron and the conquest of Jerusalem are mentioned with brevity and dispatch, as if they were important only insofar as they affected individual heroes or themes of the narrative. The three pericopes of II Samuel ii 12-iv 12 leave the reader wondering about "the long war" between David and Ishbaal (II. iii 1) and the relationship of Judah and Israel to the Philistines during this period. There is no hint of an answer to these questions. One episode (II. ii 12-31) recounts an early skirmish of the Benjaminites with David's men, but the main purpose of this pericope is to provide a motive for the assassination of Abner in the following chapter. Indirectly, this pericope explains why David cannot be held responsible for Abner's death, and for this reason it has been included.

The theological orientations of "David's Rise" and "the Succession History" are also similar. Both interpret David's reign over Israel as a part of God's plan for His people. Yet the supernatural occurrences which dominate the older cultic legends of the amphictyonic era[13] (cf. the Gideon narrative, Judges vi-viii) are missing from this later historiography. Even the somewhat fanciful tales of David and the giant, David and Saul in the wilderness, and David and the oracle emphasize human decisions and deeds, whereas the divine activity remains in the background. David outsmarts and outmaneuvers Saul and the giant; David and his men, not Yahweh, fight the Amalekites and the Philistines. Of the writers of "David's Rise" and "the Succession History" Noth says:

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[13] Cf. von Rad, Gesammelte Studien, p. 158.

> They no longer see God intervening directly in the course of events with isolated mighty actions. In the foreground they see men acting with their human desires, their wisdom and successes, their follies and wickedness; and the events of their age seemed to them to be completely determined by human actions and their varied motives.[14]

Of course, there are differences as well as similarities between "David's Rise" and "the Succession History," which make it clear that they were not composed by the same historian. Both seek to exculpate David, but the reserve and impartiality[15] of "the Succession History" distinguish it from the other writing. The former refers to the actions and judgments of Yahweh only at three points in the narrative and then in brief, unobtrusive asides;[16] "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (II. xi 27), for example (cf. II. xii 24 and xvii 14). Repeated references to such motifs as "the Lord is with him" or "he inquired of the

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[14] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 221.

[15] Rost nonetheless insists that "the Succession History" was composed in majorem gloriam Solomonis (Thronnachfolge, p. 128).

[16] Ibid, p. 124.

Lord"[17] do not occur here. Moreover, the case for David's innocence is less impressive, not only because David murders Uriah but also because his final actions as king bring about the execution of Joab and Shimei, another member of the house of Saul. To a narrative as convinced of David's virtue as is "David's Rise," the objectivity of the sister writing would hardly be acceptable.

"The Succession History" is admittedly a more tightly constructed document. By contrast the arrangement of some episodes of "David's Rise" seems haphazard. However, when the latter's compositional techniques are more closely examined, the initial impression of "loose" construction must be considerably revised. The arrangement of David's various adventures in the wilderness of Judah illustrates the point. During these episodes (I. xxiii-xxvi) Saul is hunting David like a "partridge in the wilderness" (xxvi 20). Only when the king is diverted by the Philistines or becomes remorseful over his treatment of David can our hero relax (I. xxiii 27; xxiv 17-18; xxvi 21-25). Saul's pursuit allows no order or pattern in David's existence. Hence, the events in this part of his life are necessarily disconnected.

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[17] The absence of cultic interests (e.g. the holy oracle) from "the Succession History" distinguishes this work from the other Samuel materials (cf. Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 83). Cf. also Carlson, David, the chosen King, p. 134.

A meeting with Jonathan here, a romance with Abigail there; close to capture here, safe from danger there—such adventures can be joined together in a number of ways, and their present order is not purely arbitrary or untrue to the facts. Rather, the literary structure of I Samuel xxiii-xxvi is sound from both an aesthetic and a thematic point of view.

Another intriguing feature of I Samuel xvi 14-II Samuel v is the writer's fondness for relating what appears to be a full description of a certain episode, then varying the details in a subsequent account of the same event, which is presented from the perspective of another witness. One example is Doeg's version of David's secret meeting with Ahimelech, according to which the priest consulted the oracle for David (I xxii 9-10). Other examples are the two reports of Saul's death (I. xxxi 1-7 and II. i 1-10) and the two versions of the Amalekite's death (II. i 15 and iv 10). With regard to the latter, David orders his men to kill the messenger in one place but later says that he slew the man himself. What really happened? Caird defends the authenticity of both passages on the grounds that it is characteristic of the author to present the facts in his own words and the variant report in the words of one of the characters.[18]

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[18] Cf. Caird, *IB*, p. 859. Nübel's literary analysis of I. xxi-xxii and xxxi-II. 1-10 is similar (*Davids Aufstieg*, p. 65). Both regard the alleged discrepancies as more apparent than real.

This is a convincing hypothesis to which one may add the observation that the variations cited above heighten the reader's curiosity and in no way interfere with the clarity of the narrative. The writer delights in depicting events from more than one standpoint without, of course, blurring their basic contents. One instance of a similar ambiguity in "the Succession History" is the conflicting tales of Ziba and Meribaal following Absalom's insurrection (II. xvi 1-4 and xix 24-30). Did Meribaal plan to use the situation to his own advantage, as Ziba claims, or does the servant lie? Which story does David believe? The narrative does not tell us. However, such omissions do not flaw but rather enhance the writer's artistry.

One feature of "David's Rise" has no parallel in "the Succession History": the building up of an ideological pattern by repetition of similar incident. This is to be observed in the numerous allusions of the various characters to some mysterious divine promise,[19] the exact contents or occasion of which are not disclosed but in light of which David's future can be foretold. The same technique is exemplified in the juxtaposition of two consecutive oracles at I Samuel xxiii 1-13 and II Samuel v 17-25, in which essentially the same formula is applied to slightly different situations. But the recurrence of such incidents in the original "David's Rise" should not be confused with the extraneous additions which derive from the hands of later editors. The difference between the mere duplication of the secondary materials (cf. I xviii 10-11, e.g.) and the imaginative repetition of the original writing can be seen most clearly in the narratives where David declares his respect for the Lord's anointed. The first two, I Samuel xxiv and xxvi, are based on the same episode but are nonetheless distinctive in many details. The third tradition (David's execution of the Amalekite, II. i 12-16) is an appropriate sequel, which carries the development of the original motif a step further. The writer completes the cycle at II Samuel iv 10, by which time he has drawn attention to the idea of Saul's inviolability by repeating a similar episode (I. xxiv and xxvi) and by relating two different versions of its sequel (II. i 15 and iv 10). The skillful use of this device is in basic accord with the literary and theological purposes of "the Story of David's Rise."

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[19] Cf. Eissfeldt, Komposition, pp. 26-27.

The Historical Setting and Motifs of "David's Rise"

In assessing the many wise strategies of David, it is easy to ignore his blunders, especially the ill-advised policies towards Saul's descendants and the northern tribes.

Prior to the murder of Ishbaal, of course, David did everything within reason to curry favor with the men of Israel. He wrote a lament eulogizing Saul and Jonathan; he tried to bargain with Abner for a political settlement which would end the hostilities between Judah and Israel; then, to strengthen his ties to the house of Saul, David insisted that Michal become his wife. (See "King over Judah," pp. 156-58, for a full discussion of these events.) Had Saul's daughter produced an heir to David's throne, it is possible that the union of all Israel under the house of David would have been permanent. But this is pure speculation, for David soon became estranged from Michal. He also made the mistake of playing favorites with his own tribe of Judah, a miscalculation which cost him dearly[1] (cf. II. xix 39-43). But the worst political error of David's career was probably the execution of Saul's sons and grandsons in the sordid affair at Gibeon.

The Gibeon narrative (II. xxi 1-14) attempts to account for these deaths as an unfortunate but necessary remedy for a famine which Yahweh had inflicted upon Israel.[2] The Lord is angry, says the oracle, for "there is blood guilt on Saul and his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death" (II. xxi 1). Accordingly, the males of Saul's family are to be sacrificed to propitiate the divine wrath. Naturally, no malice is attributed to David for his part in the deed. The whole episode is represented as a matter between Yahweh, Saul, and the Gibeonites. But, despite the whitewash, II Samuel xxi 1-14 is not very effective propaganda on our hero's behalf (which may explain its relegation to the appendix of II Samuel). First, David initiates the discussion with the Gibeonites, urging them to square their accounts with Saul Their reply, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house," is often taken as a demand for blood. Yet J. J. Glück[3] contends that the plain sense of the statement is that the men of Gibeon did not want to get involved. What is meant, therefore, by the following remark, "Neither is it for us to put any man to death," is that they preferred to let the matter drop. Glück goes on to point out that David selected the victims and that these seven males probably did not represent all Saul's sons and grandsons[4] but only those who were regarded as potential agitators or pretenders to the throne at the time. Later, when Meribaal is brought to the king's table so that David can keep him under close surveillance, it is observed that all Saul's descendants are dead—whether from natural causes the writer does not say.

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[1] Cf. Noth, History of Israel, p. 202.

[2] Cf. A. S. Kapelrud, "King David and the Sons of Saul," The Sacral Kingship, pp. 298-301.

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[3] Cf. J. J. Glück, "Merab or Michal," ZAW LXXVII: 1 (1965), 72-81.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 80. Glück supposes that other descendants may have been sired by Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Ishbaal (Saul's sons), in addition to the children of Michal, Merab, and Rizpah.

The importance of the Gibeon executions has not been recognized by some historians,[5] perhaps because the influence and popularity of Saul and his family with the northern tribes have also been underestimated. Despite their awareness of Saul's failings and their initial enthusiasm for David, most Israelites identified themselves more with Saul's ups and downs than with David's. After all, the men of Israel had fought by the side of Saul and his sons, whereas David depended primarily on professional soldiers. Saul was also a kinsman and an able leader under whose hand a weak and demoralized tribal league gave way to the monarchy. More than that, Saul was genuinely esteemed by his people, as is attested even by the traditions which are unfriendly towards the first king. (Cf. I. x 24, "There is none like him among all the people;" and xv 35, "And Samuel grieved over Saul.") In his famous lament David pictures his predecessor as one of the "mighty ones" who brought glory and riches to the nation. Saul and Jonathan are Israel's

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[5] Cf. John Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 186-87, who views the massacre of the Saulides as one of several events which created difficulties for David in the north. But Noth argues that David's first and most grievous error was to allow Judah a privileged position vis-a-vis the majority of the tribes (History of Israel, p. 202).

"glory" (II. i 19). Most Israelites were probably familiar with this lament and gave credit to David for words which expressed the nation's grief so nobly. Yet the men of Israel were also aware that at the time Saul was fighting on Mount Gilboa, David was in the employ of the Philistines. Nor had the Saulides forgotten what happened to Abner, whose safety was supposedly guaranteed by the Hebron government. They also know that Ishbaal's head was taken to Hebron by assassins who considered themselves servants of David. Now that David had won the allegiance of the northern tribes (II. v 1-3), those loyal to Saul's memory must have been cruelly disappointed by the human sacrifices at Gibeon. No doubt they expected more humane conduct from the man who had once shown his sympathy for Saul and Jonathan. It is even possible that David gave assurances prior to his covenant with the elders of Israel that no harm would befall Saul's family, although this cannot be proved. In any case, David made up his mind to carry out a purge of Saul's heirs in order to discourage possible revolts. This policy backfired, for soon the men of Israel were looking for an opportunity to strike back at David. When Absalom raised the banner of insurrection, they flocked to his side.[6] At least the massive defection from David's ranks at this time cannot be explained entirely in terms of the personal appeal of Absalom or the maladministration of justice at the Jerusalem gate (II. xv 1-6). Rather, it is evident that the bitter words of Shimei sum up the resentment felt by many of his kinsmen toward David: "Begone, begone, you man of blood, you worthless fellow! The Lord has avenged upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your ruin is upon you; for you are a man of blood" (II. xvi 7-8).

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[6] Cf. Bright's interpretation of the causes of Absalom's revolt (A History of Israel, p. 188).

David's troubles with the northern tribes do not stop with Absalom's rebellion, which was supported by Judeans[7] as well. A still more ominous flare-up follows the successful termination of the Absalom crisis. Sheba ben Bichri, a Benjaminite who may have been a relative of Saul,[8] leads the Israelites in a revolt against David and the Judeans. Cries Sheba,

> We have no portion in David,
> and no inheritance in the son of Jesse;
> every man to his tents, O Israel! (II. xx 1)

The Israelites are defeated, and Sheba is beheaded, but his outcry becomes a slogan around which powerful dissident elements in the north rally from this day until the disruption of the kingdom (cf. I Kings xii 16). Hence, even prior to Solomon's oppressive demands and Rehoboam's intransigence, many Israelites were resolved to repudiate the house of David. They resent the extirpation of Saul's heirs and are unwilling to accept the hegemony of the tribe of Judah.

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[7] Ibid. (Prominent Judahites involved in the revolt were Ahithophel and Amasa.)

[8] So Bright, A History of Israel, p. 189.

In the shibboleths of Sheba and Jeroboam, the intense factional jealousies between north and south are unconcealed. Yet the issue at stake in these years of struggle is defined in theological as well as political terms: does the reign of David violate the religious heritage of Israel? Unlike Saul, David did not seek the consent of all the tribes before he assumed the kingship. Has not David usurped the place which lawfully belongs to the house of Saul, demands Shimei, and does not David's rule conflict with the purposes of Yahweh? On one level "the Succession History" attempts to answer this question.[9] The positive side of David's relations with the house of Saul is emphasized in the Meribaal narrative, where the king's interest in the son of Jonathan arises entirely out of a spirit of good will—according to the writer's interpretation, that is. Later the narrative notes the patience and restraint of David's actions towards those involved in the insurgencies against his government.

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[9] Cf. supra, p. 196.

Meribaal's indiscretion (should Ziba's story be believed,[10] II. xvi 1-4) was overlooked, and the Bichrites who supported Sheba are pardoned.[11] Shimei, a more serious offender, is left alone until the end of David's life. But despite these facts, "the Succession History" is much too realistic,[12] as we have seen, to satisfy the Jerusalem court, much less to mollify the malcontents whom the author is apparently hoping to persuade. For this reason it is highly unlikely that this writing was officially commissioned by Solomon's government.[13] "David's Rise," on the other hand, deals more effectively with the fundamental questions mentioned above: is the Davidic kingship, despite the bloodshed connected with its establishment, a legitimate authority over Israel? Is this government therefore entitled to the support of all the clans of Israel?

With these questions in mind the writer opens and closes his narrative with the affirmation of Yahweh's approval of David. From his initial appearance at Saul's court till the conquest of Jerusalem (I. xvi 18; II. v 10),

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[10] Cf. _supra_, p. 199.

[11] Cf. II. xx 21.

[12] Cf. _supra_, p. 197.

[13] Cf. Noth, _History of Israel_, p. 220.

"the Lord is with him."[14] The idea is amplified and underscored by a parade of witnesses from the house of Saul, who love David and predict that he will replace Saul as king. Saul, Jonathan, and Michal are said to "love" David (I. xvi 21; xviii 20; xx 17). Likewise, Saul, Jonathan, and Abner foresee David as Israel's future monarch (I. xxiii 17; xxiv 21; II. iii 9-10). In addition to Saul's family, all Israelites accept and encourage the young courtier from the start of his career. Thus "all Israel and Judah" love David (I. xviii 28). When Abner was murdered by Joab, "all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to slay Abner the son of Ner'' (II. iii 37). Finally, the argument that David is the rightful king over north[15] as well as south is spelled out in Abner's tirade against Ishbaal: "God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba" (II. iii 9-10).

Of course, the dissension of David and Saul continues throughout the narrative but is understood not simply as a contest between the Lord's Elect and his opposite number but also as a legitimate conflict of interests. There is thus no categorical rejection[16] of Saul in the original "David's Rise." Nor is Saul caricatured as an ignoble creature whose conduct can only be explained as some deep-seated perversity or psychological aberration. The writer tends rather to account for Saul's animosity towards David within the context of events which would normally provoke hostile behavior. Saul resents the praise bestowed on his young protégé (I. xviii 6-7); Saul is ambitious for his sons and jealous of their prerogatives (I. xx 30-31); his kingdom is threatened by David's alliances, so Saul moves swiftly to punish the conspirators and to warn others not to assist his rival (I. xxii-xxiii). Such actions proceed without the writer's endorsement, but they still make sense as a natural human reaction to happenings which pose a serious threat to Saul. Also, several episodes create a genuine sympathy for Saul; for example, the utter collapse of the king at Endor followed by his determination to die by his own hand rather than to suffer humiliation at the hands of the Philistines. This much is clear: a man with Saul's zeal on behalf of his sons, his religion,[17] and his nation cannot be undeserving of his people's devotion, regardless of his faults. In this connection the writer stresses Saul's final meeting with David in the wilderness of Ziph (I xxvi 1-25). Although no lasting reconciliation occurs, they do part in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. As in I Samuel xxiv, Saul gives David his blessing. David in turn expresses his esteem for "the Lord's anointed." In this way "the Story of David's Rise" seeks to impress upon its readers the integrity of Saul's status during his kingship as well as the reasons why David was chosen to replace him. The absence of unduly harsh judgments or calumnies against Saul is another indication that this narrative was designed to win a hearing for David without antagonizing its audience.

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[14] Cf. S. Amsler, David, Roi et Messie, pp. 25-26, who argues that the Lord's presence with David is the dominant motif of "David's Rise."

[15] Noth maintains the the political distinction between "north" and "south" dates from David's enthronement by the "six southern tribes" at Hebron (History of Israel, pp. 181-83).

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[16] Contrast the later traditions at I. xv 1-xvi 13 and the interpolation at I. xxviii 17-19a. Cf. supra, pp. 14, 120.

However, Saul's conduct still stands in sharp contrast to that of David. While the latter is partly to blame for embroiling the priests of Nob in their fatal dispute with Saul, the former gives the order to execute "Yahweh's priests," a command which the king's servants refuse to obey. Here as elsewhere Saul is swept along by the tide of his emotions, alienating Jonathan, trying to kill David, and slaughtering the inhabitants of Nob. Saul is nonetheless depicted not as a villain who was rejected from the outset but as a man who brings ruin on himself by his deeds. His fate is perhaps anticipated in Jonathan's warning not to "sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause" (I. xix 5). But Saul's doom is not sealed until the fearful vision at Endor, which leads the reader to conclude that the right of Saul's house to Israel's throne is also forfeit. According to the prophecy, Saul and his sons will be dead on the morrow (I. xxviii 19b). David's fortunes, on the other hand, are as rosy as his behavior is circumspect. His reverence for "the Lord's anointed" extends to Saul's family as well, or so the writer would have us believe (I. xxiv 22-23). David also denies any complicity in the series of unusual deaths, including apoplexy (Nabal), murder (Abner), assassination (Ishbaal), which pave the way for his accession. By now the rationale for "David's Rise" comes clearly into view. This writing wants to prove that David was not a bloodthirsty or irreligious man. David did not take his throne by unlawful means, whatever his mistakes later on. His steadfastness in the face of temptations like those of I Samuel xxiv-xxvi attests his worthiness of the office Yahweh gave to him. His innocence in the deaths of Abner and Ishbaal confirms the truthfulness of the earlier promise to Saul that his kinsmen would not be harmed, nor his "name destroyed" from his father's house (I xxiv 23).

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[17] Cf. supra, p. 117. Cf. also J. M. Myers, "Saul son of Kish," IDB, IV, 228-233.

The elaboration of the oracle motif adds to the luster of David's halo. While Saul violates the holiness of the Nob priesthood,[18] David gives sanctuary to Abiathar, who makes the powers of his function available to David. Through the oracle David receives encouragement at critical moments and detailed instructions which enable him to plot successful strategies. Meanwhile, Saul calls upon the oracle in vain, for "the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets" (I. xxviii 6). Saul's ineffectual and losing efforts against the Philistines are effectively contrasted with David's decisive victories in the valley of Rephaim. In the final pericope of "David's Rise" (II. v 17-25), David goes into battle assured of the divine assistance which was denied to Saul. His victory over the Philistines is the monumental achievement which Abner had predicted in his appeal to the northern tribes: "For the Lord has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies'" (II. iii 18).

To return now to the accusations of Shimei and the revolts which manifest the bitter opposition engendered by David's later policies towards the house of Saul. It is evident that the motives of "David's Rise" can be understood in light of these developments. This writing opposes, for example, Shimei's argument that David's kingship is being undermined as a consequence of violent deeds. Although there is no attempt to obscure the cloud of suspicious circumstances under which David came to power, the allegation that David is a "man of blood" is emphatically denied. On the contrary, David's generosity towards Saul and his family is demonstrated by the wilderness meetings (I. xxiv and xxvi) as well as by the two occasions on which David poses as blood avenger[19] for the house of Saul (II. i and iv). David's unwillingness to harm his enemies is also stressed in the clash with Nabal (I xxv), which occasions the plea of Abigail on her husband's behalf. Her insistence that bloodguilt is incompatible with the Lord's plan for David is of the utmost importance. In fact, the far-reaching implications of Abigail's prophecy make the other motifs of "David's Rise" appear preliminary by comparison. Says Abigail: "For the Lord will surely make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord; and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live" (I xxv 28). Taking the components of this statement in reverse order, they can be seen as both a summary and an extension of the writer's apology for David and his house: (1) Evil (bloodguilt, sacrilege) shall not be found in David; (2) David wages Yahweh's battles (against the Philistines; with the aid of the oracle); and (3) David's dynasty, unlike that of Saul, will be established as a "sure house."[20]

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[18] Cf. McKane, TBC, pp. 138-144, passim.

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[19] Cf. Morgenstern, "David and Jonathan," JBL (1959), p. 325.

What are the implications of this analysis for the dating of "David's Rise"? First, it has been argued that bad relations between the Jerusalem regime and the northern tribes made some such apologetic desirable in the period following the execution of Saul's sons and grandsons and the subsequent revolts of Absalom and Sheba.[21] Thus the shaping of traditions in accord with the propagandistic interests of the Jerusalem palace could have begun in connection with the events listed above, i.e., some years before the end of David's reign (circa 961 B.C.).[22] This political ferment does not subside but increases during the reign of David's successor, as is evidenced by Jeroboam's first attempt to overthrow Solomon (I Kings xi 26-28).[23] Following this event advocates of the Davidic rule, such as the writer of "David's Rise," must have continued to hope that the breach between the pro-Saul and pro-David factions could be healed. In any event, the surprisingly positive attitude of this narrative indicates that it, like "the Succession History," was written during the reign of Solomon. Although "David's Rise" does not gloss over the tensions between the hero and the house of Saul, the protagonists of the story find that their difficulties are temporary. In the concluding chapter (II. v 1-3) the tribes of Israel recognize the head of the Judean state as their sovereign also. Their tribute to the king doubtless epitomizes the rapprochement which the writer envisions for Israel under the rule of David and his sons: "And the Lord said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel'" (II. v 2). Obviously the writer wants to convince his readers that they do have a "portion in David" and "an inheritance in the son of Jesse" (cf. II xx 1). The message and mood of "David's Rise" is thus conciliatory and hopeful throughout, which would be expected of a writing produced during the days of the United Kingdom. But, thereafter, a narrative so constructive in its depiction of Saul and the Saulides would scarcely have been possible. Hence, "the Story of David's Rise" was probably completed prior to the secession of the northern tribes (circa 921 B.C.).[24]

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[20] Cf. *supra*, p. 92.

[21] Cf. Theodore H. Robinson and W. O. E. Oesterley, *A History of Israel*, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 227, n. 5. Robinson also views Sheba's revolt as "apparently an attempt to revive the kingdom of Saul at David's expense."

[22] Cf. Bright, *A History of Israel*, p. 114, n. 26.

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[23] According to Noth, the unsuccessful uprising led by Jeroboam probably took place in the early part of Solomon's reign (History of Israel, p. 207, n. 1).

The exact identity of the writer is unknown, but he is almost certainly a member of Solomon's court. The more tendentious pericopes of I Samuel xvi 14-II Samuel v are closely related to the royalist point of view, and the other traditions are interpreted from this standpoint. Moreover, this writing, unlike "the Succession History," is unlimited in its admiration for David. The writer is therefore not only dependent on the court traditions for his major themes; his narrative represents the official interpretation of the Jerusalem palace.

Additions to "the Story of David's Rise"

The longer additions to the original writing are found in the earlier part of the narrative. The "flight and escape" cycle (I. xix 11-17; 18-24; and xxi 11-16) was probably transmitted in the oral tradition for several generations[1] before it was taken up into the comprehensive account of "David's Rise." These stories may have been inserted one at a time by different hands or all at once by the same editor. The same is also true of the Goliath narrative which is peculiar to the Masoretic text (I. xvii 12-31), David's second introduction to Saul, and the subsequent alliance with Jonathan (I. xvii 55-58; xviii 1-5). These are variant and duplicate accounts which intrude upon the continuity but do not indicate any significant departure from the themes of the original narrative. Taken together the secondary traditions of I Samuel xvii-xxi do not comprise a continuous narrative,[2] nor do they suggest a systematic revision[3] of the early document. Rather, these passages seem to have been added at differant times for various reasons.[4]

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[24] Cf. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 190, n. 61; for another view, Noth, History of Israel, p. 225.

[1] See supra, pp. 36-39.

The glosses in I Samuel xviii 10-11, 17-19, 21b, 29b and xxiv 13, conspicuous for their animosity to Saul, derive from the period after the northern tribes broke away from the United Kingdom,[5] as we have seen. The later, anti-Saul sentiments at I Samuel xxviii 17-19a, however, point back to Saul's rejection by Samuel in the Gilgal tradition of

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[2] Cf. Pfeiffer, _Introduction_, p. 365, and Weiser, _The Old Testament_, p. 160. Contrast Caird, _IB_, p. 861, and Szikszai, _IDB_, IV, pp. 204-09.

[3] Cf. Pfeiffer, _Introduction_, pp. 362-63.

[4] Cf. Weiser, _The Old Testament_, pp. 166-170.

[5] Cf. _supra_, pp. 8-10, 28, 85.

I Samuel xv 1-35.[6] Since the latter narrative together with its sequel, the story of David's anointing, were probably added by the deuteronomic compiler of the Books of Samuel,[7] the interpolation of verses 17-19a into chapter xxviii can safely be ascribed to the same source. Other deuteronomic additions are the chronological summaries (II. ii 10-11; v 4-5) and the family registers of II Samuel iii 2-6 and v 12-16,[8] which serve as a bridge between "David's Rise" and "the Succession History." The embellishments at I Samuel xx 14-16, 40-42 and II Samuel iv 4 are also inspired by events recounted in "the Succession History" but are presumably pre-deuteronomic.[9]

Still, despite the later expansions and other corruptions of the text, the original writing is remarkably well-preserved. This is due in part to its exceptional literary merit, which doubtless gained the attention and respect of the scribes attached to the Jerusalem court. The compactness of the narrative evidently discouraged many unwarranted interruptions and rearrangements. More importantly, the theological qualities of the original "Story of David's

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[6] Cf. supra, p. 14, n. 3.

[7] Cf. supra, p. 110, n. 7.

[8] Cf. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien, p. 63, n. 2.

[9] Cf. supra, pp. 43-44, 155, n. 1.

Rise" made it an invaluable document to the Davidic dynasty. Since this writing was already strongly pro-David and pro-monarchy, there was no need for any elaborate modification of an earlier point of view. The proprietary interests of later Jerusalem governments thus protected the narrative from the intrusion of alien ideas, and David's successors on the throne of Judah continued to use "David's Rise" as a brilliant apologetic for their rule over the people of the Lord.

APPENDIX

A Summary of the Original "Story of David's Rise."

The original "David's Rise" begins with David's introduction to Saul (I. xvi 14-23). Brought to Saul's court on account of his musical abilities, David becomes a national celebrity overnight by defeating a famous Philistine warrior in single combat (xvii 1-11; 32-54). However, the successes of David make Saul jealous (xviii 6-9; 12-16). To keep up appearances, he offers David the hand of his daughter, Michal, in marriage (xviii 20-29a), though secretly Saul is already looking for some means to rid himself of his rival. He confides his hostility to Jonathan, his son and heir apparent to the throne, but Jonathan sides with David. For the time being at least Saul is persuaded not to harm David (xix 1-7).

Subsequent episodes recount David's flight from Gibeah (xix 8-xxi 16; of these only xix 8-10, xx 1b-13; 17-39, and xxi 2-10 are original). Seized by one of his fits of depression, Saul tries to pin David to the wall, barely missing with his spear. David hurries to Jonathan, and together they devise a stratagem to force Saul's hand. David will stay away from the king's table. If his absence makes Saul angry, then Jonathan will know that his father has made up his mind to kill David. The ruse provokes a bitter quarrel between Saul and Jonathan, and David has no choice but to flee. He heads south toward Judah but on his way stops off at the Nob sanctuary for food and weapons. Ahimelech, the chief priest, comes to David's aid, not realizing that the traveler is now persona non grata with the crown. Unfortunately, Ahimelech's meeting with David is witnessed by Doeg, a man loyal to Saul.

In Judah David organizes a band of malcontents and freebooters whose initial adventure takes them to Moab (xxii 1-2). Here David seeks political asylum for his parents (xxii 3-5). At Gibeah, in the meantime, word of David's soldiers and of his transaction with Ahimelech has reached the ears of the king (xxii 6-23). Saul orders Doeg to execute the priests of Nob; only Abiathar escapes with his life. When Saul hears that David has taken refuge in Keilah (a Judean city rescued by David's band from the Philistines), the king sends an army after him (xxiii 1-13). Once again our hero is forced to flee, this time to the wilderness of Judah.

Despite the encouragement given by Jonathan at the outset of his wilderness sojourn (xxiii 14-18), David's existence during this period is precarious at best. The Ziphites conspire with Saul to report David's whereabouts (xxiii 19-24a). David narrowly avoids capture in the wilderness of Ma'on (xxiii 24b-xxiv 1). On two occasions the Israelite army is closing in on him, only to be outsmarted by the wily guerrilla captain (xxiv and xxvi). Both times Saul falls into his enemy's hands, but David lets him go unharmed. In the intervening episode (xxv) David also spares the life of the Calebite sheepholder, Nabal. Still the life of the soldier of fortune holds too many uncertainties for David. Saul cannot be trusted, so David leaves the Judean wilds for the territory of the Philistines (xxvii 1-4).

David now goes over to Achish, king of Gath, and receives as fief the city of Ziklag (I. xxvii-II. i). Achish thinks that his vassal is carrying out raids on the Israelites, but actually David is using Ziklag as a base of operations against the enemies of his people (xxvii 5-12). Achish even invites David to join forces with him in a giant Philistine offensive against Saul (xxviii 1-2). Luckily for David, the other Philistine lords object and send the Hebrews back to Ziklag (xxix 1-11). Upon their arrival they find the city burned and sacked (xxx 1-31). After consulting the oracle, David pursues and overtakes the Amalekite marauders, and the Hebrews recover their wives and property. The remainder of the booty David divides with the clans of Judah.

Meanwhile, Saul despairs over his chances of repulsing the armies of the Philistines (xxviii 3-25 follows xxx 1-31 in the original narrative). With the assistance of a necromancer at Endor the king has a seance with Samuel's shade, from whom he learns that he and his three sons will die on the morrow. These predictions are fulfilled in the following episode (xxxi 1-13). The news of Israel's defeat is carried to David by an Amalekite messenger who claims that he found Saul on the battlefield and finished him off (II. i 1-16). For this act of _lèse-majesté_ David has the Amalekite put to death. David's sympathy for the fallen Saul and Jonathan is expressed in the lament that follows (II. i 17-27).

With Saul dead the southern tribes gather at Hebron to acclaim David king over Judah (II. i 1-4a). However, Abner, Saul's general, sets up a rival government at Mahanaim with Ishbaal as its titular head (ii 8-11). The struggle between Abner and David had already begun with David's overtures to Jabesh-gilead (ii 4b-7); now the rivalry breaks into open conflict (ii 12 ff.). Abner's men are routed, but in the heat of battle Asahel, Joab's brother, is cut down by Abner. The opportunity for vengeance comes when David invites the Israelite general to Hebron for a conference (iii 1; 6-39). Catching Abner off his guard, Joab treacherously murders him. Abner's assassination is followed by that of Ishbaal (iv 1-12), and the way is cleared for David's triumph.

The elders of the northern tribes formally recognize David as king (II. v 1-3). His success is crowned by the capture of Jerusalem (v 6-10) and two decisive victories over the Philistines (v 17-25). With these three events the original "Story of David's Rise" comes to an end.

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